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LONDON: SWAN SONNENSCHEIN & CO., Ltd.

AUGUSTA, EMPRESS OF GERMANY

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Augusta
Empress of Germany

BY

CLARA TSCHUDI

AUTHOR OF

"*Marie Antoinette*," "*Eugénie*," "*Napoleon's Mother*," *etc.*

AUTHORISED TRANSLATION FROM THE NORWEGIAN

BY

E. M. COPE.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

LONDON:

SWAN SONNENSCHEIN & CO., LIM.,

1900

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

In spite of her long life and exalted position for many years, but little is known of Augusta, Empress of Germany, and yet her biography is one that cannot fail to be of essential interest to thoughtful readers. She was a noble woman, in whom we trace the developing of character by trial, the maturing of strength by suffering.

Her many defects are by no means overlooked by the authoress, but in the light of her joyless painful life, even these can be condoned.

She had no free scope for natural affection as a child, and grew up reserved, even rigid, continually thrown back upon herself in moments of warmth or expansiveness, and looked upon as cold-hearted, though she never ceased to yearn for the love of those about her.

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Her connection with the Red Cross Society is perhaps not generally known in this country, nor the substantial encouragement she gave to the scheme when first introduced in 1864. She excelled as an organiser, and the number and wide scope of her charities testify at the present day to her capabilities, as well as to her real tenderness of heart.

Her tastes were those of peace and intellectual development, which were simply unintelligible to the Emperor, and in the total absence of mutual interests, the Imperial couple spent their fifty years of married life "a thousand miles apart."

The fact that several of the characters and incidents in this slight sketch are within the recollection of many may give it an additional interest, and will, I trust, afford the genuine pleasure to the public, that it has provided for the translator.

E. M. Cope.

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THE EMPRESS AUGUSTA.

CHAPTER I

BERLIN EN FÊTE—THE VICTOR'S WIFE

THE Queen of Prussia received the news of the victory of Sedan from King William during the night following the battle, and early the next day, September 3rd, 1870, the Superintendent of Police had the telegram printed and copies affixed at the corners of every street.

Words cannot describe the awakening of Berlin that morning when citizens embraced each other as they met, when rancour was forgotten and enemies pressed each others' hands with fervour, when crowds of high and low, rich and poor, flocked hither and thither, exulting in one strong feeling of joy, the glory of victory.

Age and difference in rank are ignored in a time of universal happiness, and veteran officials sang the songs of the Fatherland side by side with the youngest of her students, while the harmonious beating of hearts seemed to efface

all sorrow and mourning, in the thought of their common honour and glory.

They had passed through a season of intense activity, when prosperity and human life were trembling in the balance, but it must be conceded to the Germans that from the very beginning of the war, they never wavered in their object; and the women too were with them, they did not weep, they worked, and mothers, who but yesterday had learnt that their sons had fallen in battle, assembled to-day in the hospital, the meeting-place of the benevolent, while even children made bandages and pulled charpie, or ran to the Castle to hear the reading of the latest telegram; and when the wounded soldiers passed through the streets, they formed in groups, and sang with shrill enthusiastic voices the war-songs they had learnt at school.

Excitement had been growing ever since the opening of the campaign, but the uneasiness of early days had soon yielded to hopeful expectation, in spite of the terrific loss of human life, and now that the imprisonment of Napoleon III. was announced, the end of the struggle seemed at hand, and the nation clung the more closely to their royal family, especially to the wife of their King.

The very day that Eugénie, the beautiful, idolised Empress of the French fled from Paris to claim the hospitality of England, the people of Berlin were rallying in eager numbers to do homage to Augusta, who was early on her balcony in the clear mild air of that September morning, agitated with joy at the news of victory, and the distant sound of voices and instruments drawing nearer and nearer to the castle.

The wide stretch "Unter den Linden" was soon filled, as well as every side street on the way, while men jostled and hustled each other with perfect good humour, without anger, only with accelerated haste, if an unlucky elbow in the crowd thrust him from the footpath into the gutter. The throng was the densest round the equestrian statue of Frederick the Great, in front of the royal palace. Boys climbed up and seated themselves on the bronze horse, from which the police were powerless to dislodge them, and the Queen signed to them to let them have their way.

"Let's crown old Fritz," shouted a voice from the rabble, who all became eager to carry out the suggestion; flowers and foliage were rapidly collected, and a wreath was soon placed on the head of the King and round the neck of

his horse, while flags and pennons were planted at every corner, and a child perched on the very top of the statue played "Die Wacht am Rhein" on a Jew's harp. Instinctively, as if at the word of command, men, women and children sang the inspiring words:

"Lieb Vaterland magst ruhig sein!
Fest steht und treu die Wacht am Rhein."

Song after song was sung with ever increasing enthusiasm, until the appearance of the Queen seemed as a signal to begin the best loved words of every member of the Prussian royal house:

"Nicht Ross und Reisige
Sichern die steile Höh,
Wo Fürsten stehn;
Liebe des Vaterlands,
Liebe des frien Mann's
Gründet des Herrschers Thron
Wie Fels im Meer." *

Jubilant voices sang in praise of their royal house, and every eye turned towards their Queen, as the shout representing the very heart of the nation rose in deep and thankful enthusiasm.

The advent of the Queen increased the ardour of the crowd, and intensified the sound of their motley instruments, while from the grand old lindens, the house roofs and the laden

* Second verse of the Prussian hymn: "Heil dir im Siegeskranz."

balconies rose as in one unanimous chorus the shouts of "Long live our Queen!"

Then came one deputation after another to greet her, beginning with school children waving their banners, followed by workmen in blouses, fresh from their hardly begun tasks, and dismissed by their employers on the news of victory, with grimy hands and unkempt beards, many of them still grasping their tools, so that, as some of the newspapers observed: "The processions were not festive, though imposing."

Shouts of joy were heard all through the day, while hasty preparations were made for grand illuminations at night, when the old Chorale, "Now thank we all our God," sounded with blare of trumpets from the tower of the Town Hall, cannon thundered and rockets whizzed through the air, while not a policeman checked the wild spirits of the crowd.

The Queen was untiring in her thanks and greetings, now and again exchanging a few words with one or another, or dispensing gifts; but the deafening noise was too much for the weak nerves of a delicate woman, and perhaps the immediate contact with the masses was not altogether congenial to her aristocratic nature, though she held out till the last "Long live the Queen," had

died away on the night, when she sank down exhausted under the weight of past memories, deep emotion and the happiness of the present. The events of the war had constituted the Queen in a marvellous manner, the centre point for the enthusiasm of the capital.

It was to her that the King addressed his despatches with news of defeat or victory, it was she who ordered their public announcement, and it was she who formed the rallying point for the crowds assembled outside the castle, not only because she was the wife of the King, but because she had taken up her true vocation and put herself in intimate touch with her people.

"The Fatherland expects every woman to do her duty, and the first is to send help to the Rhine," had been her cry from the very beginning of the war, and one association after another arose under her organising direction, at the same time that she herself never once failed to preside at the meetings of "The Red Cross" during the whole period of the war.

"The Royal Samaritan," as she was called in her last years, devoted herself in absolute self-forgetfulness to her work, she drove every day to the military hospitals to comfort the sufferers, to encourage the nurses, to enquire into the most

urgent needs and devise means for speedy assistance. She was at the railway stations to give a kindly greeting to prisoners of war passing through the city, and a lamp was seen burning till late into the night in her private room, where she was reading reports from the hospitals, or forming plans for fresh accommodation, and many a German and French soldier must still be able to recall the days when he heard her kind words and enjoyed proofs of her sympathy.

The consort of William I. had never been so popular as during the war of 1870, and unfortunately we cannot deny the fact that it was really her one moment of triumph, the first and only time that she experienced in her own capital the warm, heartful devotion of the people.

Her retired life was utterly unknown to the masses who derive their sole information from court lacqueys, and while the career of the old Emperor was followed step by step, there was a majority who knew no more of Augusta than that husband and wife each occupied a separate story in the castle, and that they trod their path in life, side by side in deed, but with a thousand miles between them.

It is well known that the Emperor William never loved his wife, though towards the close of

their life there were a few who called the friendship that bound them together "A nice edifying union," but even loyal Prussians smiled when one newspaper after her death extolled the fifty-nine "happy" years of her married life. Without exaggeration, we must confess that Augusta of Prussia was one of the least attractive royal ladies of her time; in her youth she was hated for her studied condescension which was called pride, and in her advanced years she was wearisome with her almost theatrical graciousness.

In spite of her early life at Weimar, the most intellectual court of the century, her education by Goethe, one of Germany's greatest thinkers, and being called to share the most powerful Imperial throne of Europe, she wandered through life, neglected by her own, and misunderstood by the crowd.

It is the aim of the following sketch to show how much of the blame that recoils upon her we may dare to ascribe to the force of circumstances.

CHAPTER II

THE EMPEROR WILLIAM'S MOTHER—HIS EARLY LOVE

THE German painter Gustav Richter had finished his celebrated portrait of Queen Louise and it had found its niche in the most prominent place of the first room, opposite to the grand entrance in the Art Exhibition of Berlin in 1880. Eager groups stood day by day in contemplation before the painting, breathing whispered words in praise of the artist and recalling many an episode in the life of the deceased queen, while some related that the Emperor had been the first to visit the Exhibition and had wept as he gazed on the likeness of his mother.

It was not merely the best work of a great painter, the woman it portrayed had withstood Napoleon, given birth to William the Victor, and been the guardian angel of the great German Federation. It was of her that the poet-warrior, Theodor Körner, was thinking when he sang :

"Kommt dann der Tag der Freiheit oder Rache:
Dann ruft dein Volk, dann, deutsche Frau! erwache,
Ein guter Engel für die gute Sache."

The historian who writes warmly of the Emperor William, and who is comparatively cold and unsympathetic in presence of his wife, cannot refrain from dwelling on two women who influenced his life: his mother and his early love.

Louise, daughter of Charles Louis of Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Caroline Frederica of Hesse-Darmstadt, was born March 10th, 1776, and began her life in Berlin when she was seventeen.

She is still the type of female virtue in Prussia, and we gather from the poet Novalis how greatly her example contributed to lead both court and people to appreciate simple family life. He says: "Happy marriages are on the increase, and the domestic virtues are more in vogue." If court ceremony required it, she wore costly robes, but her every-day gowns were plain and generally white, a style which the ladies of Berlin were not slow to imitate.

There is a characteristic anecdote of her in her early days as queen, when she was told that a count and a shoemaker were both waiting in the ante-room.

"Let the shoemaker enter first," she said "the count can certainly better afford to wait."

Frederick William III. and his wife passed many peaceful days in the little castle of Paretz, a few miles from Potsdam, where the simply attired Queen of Prussia might be seen any summer's day visiting some poor cottage, accompanied by her little children.

But peace and happiness were soon to be exchanged for uneasiness and sorrow, consequent on the war with the French, who, as we know, overcame the Prussians at the battle of Jena, October 14th, 1806, and then pushed on to Berlin, which Napoleon and his army entered thirty days after their victory.

Queen Louise was in the neighbourhood of Jena when the fight began, and then had to flee in all haste to Berlin, where she had left the royal children, to learn on her arrival that they had quitted the capital.

"The Queen overtook us on our flight at Schwedt and we rushed down the grand staircase to meet her," related the Emperor William, adding: "Mother kissed us and remained standing, while she said: 'You see me in tears, and I am weeping over the heavy misfortunes that have befallen us. The King has miscalculated

the strength of his army and their leaders, we are defeated and have to fly.'"

Later on in the evening, when she had somewhat regained her composure, she could speak more calmly to her sons.

"One single day," she said, "has sufficed to overturn what great men have been building up for centuries. You, my sons, are old enough to grasp the force of the events which are crushing us to the dust, recall them when your mother has ceased to live; weep, but do not be satisfied with tears alone, work and grow strong."

Fresh defeats drove them to further flight, first to Stettin, then to Danzig, until they all three at length reached Königsberg, where they found the King, and where they remained until the beginning of 1807, when the Queen removed to Memel, and lived there for a whole year, in a hired house, overwhelmed with the weight of her sorrow and humiliation. But before she reached the town, she had nearly died of nervous fever brought on by excitement and anxiety. She had to be taken from her bed in an old castle, and hurried through piercing cold in a blinding snow-storm, to spend three days and three nights either on an angry sea, or driving over fields of ice. Then the first night was

passed in a room with broken windows, the snow covered her bed, no suitable food was to be had for her, and death seemed inevitable. But she herself never lost faith, and instead of becoming worse, her serious condition improved. The King and the boys joined her a few days after her arrival in Memel, and all her loving guidance was again needed to comfort and strengthen her husband, and to restrain him from entering into an alliance with Napoleon, who keenly urged his suit.

Such "petticoat influence" simply maddened the Emperor, who became day by day more exasperated against this King and Queen, who did not cringe to him with the humble homage of the other German princes; but he had to find that his continually increasing pretentions only rendered them the more unattainable. He caused libellous papers to be printed and circulated, in which he sullied the fair reputation of the Queen with disgusting lies.

"It is not enough," exclaimed the weeping Louise, "that this man robs the King of his lands, he even casts a slur upon the honour of his wife."

After Napoleon's victory at Friedland, Alexander of Russia ignored the promises he had

made to the Prussian royal pair to withstand the enemy, and not only concluded peace with France, but entered into an alliance with her ruler.

During these sorrowful days, the Queen wrote to her father:

"We are on the point of leaving the Kingdom, imagine what my feelings are! But I beseech you, do not misunderstand your daughter, nor believe that I am crushed by despair. There are two thoughts that sustain me: the first is the conviction that we are not the playthings of a blind fate, but that we are in the hands of God. The second is the consciousness that though defeated, our honour is untarnished. Prussia did not willingly accept these slaves' fetters, but it would have been inconsistent with the character of the King to act otherwise, and none but those imbued with a keen sense of honour can understand his motives. On the first approach of danger, I shall set out for Riga, and God will help me to bear the pang of leaving our Kingdom; I need His strength, but I look up to Him, Who permits evil as well as good. It is my firm conviction that God never sends us more than we are able to bear."

She was spared the sorrow of exile, but she

had yet to pass through one of the bitterest hours of her life. It was Napoleon's intention to dismember Prussia, and apportion it among the princes of his own creation, when the King was advised to bring about a meeting between the Emperor and his own amiable, deeply humiliated wife, who alone, it was thought, might be able to persuade the Conqueror to less cruel measures.

Frederick William had not the courage to ask her in person, but sent his request in writing, which the Queen read, half blinded with her tears, as she exclaimed:

"This is the most painful blow, and the desire to assist my people can alone induce me to undertake it."

She wrote in her diary:—"What an effort this costs me, God only knows. It is a hard thing that is required of me, though self-sacrifice is no new trouble."

She went to Tilsit, trusting in the generosity of the man who so deeply injured her.

Napoleon was charmed with her grace, and exclaimed to Talleyrand:

"I knew I should see a beautiful Queen, but I have found the loveliest of all, and the most interesting of woman."

"Sire," replied Talleyrand, "will you allow

posterity to say that you did not make the most of your greatest victory for the sake of a pretty woman?"

On leaving, the Emperor offered the Queen a rose, which she accepted with a sad smile, as she said:

"Give me back Magdeburg and that will be the most lovely rose that ever bloomed for me."

Napoleon harshly interrupted her by exclaiming:

"Your Majesty forgets that it is *I* who offer, *you* have only to accept."

The rose dropped from her trembling hands, and she cried as she stepped further away from him.

"A thorn has pricked me."

The sacrifice had been in vain, and Napoleon observed in icy tones to the Prime Minister who was present:

"My remarks to the Queen were merely words of courtesy, and pledge me to nothing."

Louise returned home without a ray of hope; the Emperor seized one half of the territories of the Prussian monarch, in addition to demanding 150,000,000 francs as a war indemnity, and leaving 200,000 soldiers in that portion of Prussia which he allowed Frederick William III to call his own.

"How terribly I suffered," the Queen wrote to her trusted friend, Frau von Berg, "while weeping and entreating in the name of charity and humanity, law and sorrow. I was only a poor weak woman, a feeble instrument, and yet I feel I was superior to this mean-hearted adversary."

The year of humiliation that followed was passed by the Emperor William's mother in strictest privacy at Königsberg. All gold and silver plate had to be melted down to defray the expenses of the war, while jewels, horses and carriages were sold for the same purpose. The royal family spent the winter in an old castle, and removed in the summer to a poor little house outside the town. The inhabitants of Königsberg knew well that the table of every citizen was far better supplied than that of the King, and that it was often extremely difficult for him to meet his daily household expenses. "And yet," says a Russian statesman, who visited this impoverished court, "I would not have exchanged a thousand banquets for the sight I witnessed, a Queen presiding at a modest table, without a single ornament, whose radiant beauty and dignity contrasted but the more strikingly with her surroundings."

Anxiety and agitation had so undermined the health of Louise that she had no power to resist the ravages of low fever. "I am ill," she wrote shortly before her 33rd birthday, "and I cannot recover while things remain as they are." Then on her return from St. Petersburg, where the most brilliant fêtes had been arranged in her honour, she wrote: "Nothing can dazzle me now; my kingdom is not of this world."

The Royal family returned to Berlin on Christmas Eve, 1809, but it was a sad entry; the Queen was in tears and it was evident that her days were numbered. She longed to see the home of her childhood once again, and a few months later, she left the capital for Strelitz, where she died in agony, July 19th, 1810, surrounded by all who stood nearest to her heart, husband, grandmother, father and elder sons.

. . . . . .

Shortly before her death, the Queen of Prussia wrote:

"If posterity should ever enrol my name among those of noted women, it will be observed of these sorrowful years: 'She gave birth to children worthy of better times, and honestly strove to bring them up aright.'"

In an earlier letter to the Duke of Strelitz she remarked: "Environment and circumstances are powerful agents in education, and it is good for my children to have become acquainted with the serious side of life in their young days. If they had grown up in the lap of luxury and pride, they would have looked upon it as their right for ever; now they are learning in their father's serious expression and their mother's tearful sorrow that life is "no bank of roses."

The Queen's death made a deep impression throughout the kingdom, but her second son William was perhaps the one most acutely affected by her loss, and from the day when he grasped that his mother was sinking under the weight of sorrow, from the morning when he was called in to witness her agonising fight with death, the memory of that pure gentle woman fostered feelings of revenge in his heart. While still a child, he entreated his father to allow him to take part in the struggle against France, and when only sixteen he made his entry into Paris with the allied troops. In 1815 he shed tears of exasperation that he had arrived too late on the field of Waterloo, and as man, arms and soldiers were his sole thought. The Prussians gave him

the nickname of "Prince Slasher," and his mania for war made him unpopular with the people; but in spite of all opposition, he transformed the Prussian army of defence into one of attack, and succeeded so well that before the Franco-Prussian War, it was said of his kingdom. "It is not a country with an army, but an army with a country."

In the face of his wars and victories there are some who speak of his peaceable disposition, but nearly every action of his life was opposed to the sentiments imputed to him. Even in the hour of death his feverish delusions were occupied with addressing troops, each regiment of which he greeted by name; and in his lucid intervals, military plans formed the topic of his conversation.

The desire for war was hid behind his tenacious clinging to the memory of his mother, who was as it were her son's protecting genius in battle, as she had formerly been that of the nation.

He had paid an apparently friendly visit to the heir of Napoleon I., but his spies were in every corner of France; he did not declare war, but he awaited it in full conviction, and when it at length came, he looked upon it as the

finger of God that the declaration should have been handed to him the day before the anniversary of his mother's death. He sought for strength in her peaceful mausoleum, and felt that now at last the hour of vengeance had struck, in which he might deal a blow against France. The quiet repose of death and the grave had effaced the sorrow she had had to endure, and the French oppressor had long since been called to his account; but the son was not appeased. Since, as a boy of twelve, he had wept by the deathbed of Queen Louise, he had longed to avenge her and humiliate France, and this was his main thought now, as he accompanied his ponderous guns into the groaning land of his enemy. And on the very day that witnessed his jubilant return to his capital, he, his wife and his son might be seen standing by the grave in Charlottenburg, to return thanks and dwell on the memory of his mother.

. . . . . .

After the death of the Emperor William it was touching to discover that the veteran of 91 had been used to wear a simple little ring which was on his finger when he breathed his last, a memento of his early love, whose

lonely resting place he had been in the habit of visiting for sixty long years. It was already well known that his attachment to the Princess Radziwill had been one of the gentle influences of his life, now it was seen to have been also the strongest and most enduring, which even the great historical events of his life had never quenched.

After the removal of many difficulties, the Princess Louise of Prussia, daughter of the youngest brother of Frederick the Great, had married the brilliant and amiable Prince Anton Radziwill who was five years her junior (1796). The hindrances which had to be overcome were of no trivial nature. It is true that the Radziwills belonged to the oldest and most renowned families of Poland, that one of its ancestors had been elected governor of Lithuania in 1405, and that this princely house surpassed many a minor ruling family in Germany in wealth, honour and renown—still, it was impossible to compare the lineage of the Radziwills with that of the Hohenzollerns. But the Princess Louise was an essentially happy wife, and the Radziwill soirées and banquets were quite as brilliant, and infinitely more entertainting than any Court festivity. Prince Anton, who was himself a

good musician, patronised the best artistes of the day, and the Princess warmly shared in all the pursuits of her husband, so that the Radziwill Palace on the Wilhelms Platz in Berlin was the scene of far more real enjoyment than usually falls to the lot of Princes.

The most genial intercourse existed between the royal house of Prussia and the princely house of Radziwill, the children of both families were about the same age, and grew up together like brothers and sisters, William Radziwill, the eldest son of his house becoming the intimate friend of William of Prussia. His sister Elise, a few years his junior, was his playfellow, and during the trials of persecution and sorrow for the loss of his mother, which cast a shadow over his boyhood, the companionship of this cousin was his greatest source of comfort; the attachment became mutual and the playmate of his childhood became the beloved of his youth.

Neither of them seem to have foreseen that state reasons might prove a barrier to their union; but when the young man approached the King on the subject, his dreams were dispelled. The Ministers contended that the birth of the Princess was sufficiently high to

allow of her being his wife, but they averred that although a Hohenzollern might have married a Radziwill in the time of the Great Elector, more stringent regulations were now in force, both in Prussia and other courts of Germany, as during the reign of Frederick II. a principle had been adopted that only daughters of reigning houses, or of houses that had formerly ruled, could be recognised as of equal birth.

The certainty that a union with Elise was an utter impossibility, drove the Prince to the very verge of despair. "Nobody," he wrote to his friend, Oldwig von Natzmer, "can conceive how crushed I was in the days that followed the decision of the King, but all whom I consulted assured me that it was my duty to submit; among others, my aunt the Princess William, my old tutor Brause, and the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, whose judgment I have learnt to value. I summoned up courage to speak again to the King, who was sincere in his sympathy, but unshaken in his demands: this was February 16th (1822), and since that day I am like an orphan, in a joyless, empty world. I have the sympathy of many, but it affords me no consolation, on the contrary, for all are

unanimous in acknowledging the magnitude of the sacrifice which duty has imposed upon me."

Time did not lessen his sorrow, in spite of visits to all the German and other European Courts, nothing could remove his melancholy, and during a journey to Italy which he undertook with the King, his father was struck with the evident change in his disposition.

At the request of Prince Radziwill, the lawyer Eichhorn, tried to prove that the Radziwill family was of equal birth with the royal house of Prussia, but he was opposed by the majority of the cleverest jurists of the day. Five years were thus spent in fruitless efforts to render the marriage possible, and Prince Augustus of Prussia even suggested that he should adopt Elise, but the ministers felt it their duty as guardians of the State to declare that adoption could never make up for blood.

At this same time Prince William's younger brother Charles, was seeking an alliance with the Princess Marie of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, but her family demanded that if William married Elise Radziwill, Charles and his children should take precedence before his elder brother and his descendants. The position was becoming serious, and the King again summoned a council consist-

ing of princes, generals and court officials, who sifted at length every detail of the marriage question, to arrive at the conclusion that a union between the King's son and the Princess Radziwill would be in opposition to the law of Prussia. It seemed improbable at this time that the second son of Frederick William III., would ever be called upon to govern, but still they thought it their duty to declare that the children of a Radziwill could never ascend the throne of a Hohenzollern, and called upon the King to exercise his royal authority, which he did, though with a heavy heart, and in a letter full of tenderness he represented to his son, that every effort had been in vain, and that there was no alternative left but to sacrifice his attachment to duty, to the welfare of the State and the house of Hohenzollern.

The Prince was crushed, though he roused himself sufficiently to write the same evening to his father :—

" My dear Father,

You have settled my fate in the way which I foresaw, but which I shrank from contemplating as long as there was a ray of hope. Read in my heart the unspeakable gratitude which dwells there for all the proofs of your love,

patience and favour during the anxious five years, but especially for your letter of yesterday, which touched me deeply, and which I shall never be able to appreciate at its full value. Your fatherly tenderness and loving sympathy in the heavy lot that has befallen me, your setting forth of my duties in the state of life to which I belong, your recognition of the worth of her whom I so highly esteem, your allusions to the attempts made to fulfil the desire of my heart, prompted by love for your child, to read all this in the letter which seals my fate, inspired me with so much comfort and such a strong sense of thankfulness that my deep filial love, and the whole of my future life can alone express. I will justify your confidence in me, fight against my poignant grief, bear my heavy trial, and be firm as my irrevocable fate. I will implore the succour of God who has never failed me in the many painful moments of my life, and He will not forsake me now. . . I close my letter with my heart crushed, it is true, but clinging more warmly than ever to you, my precious father, whose paternal love never showed itself stronger than while communicating your painful decision."

This was July 23rd, 1827, and two years later, Prince William, in obedience to his father's

wishes, married the youngest daughter of the Duke of Saxe Weimar, but in spite of his thirty-two years, he was far from having overcome the grief and disappointment of his youth.*

* Elise Radziwill remained unmarried, lived with her mother far from the Court, and died September 27th, 1834. "The death of the Princess was unexpected and caused me deep sorrow," the Prince wrote to his friend Natzmer, "her mother, the Princess Louise, bears the blow with marvellous resignation"

CHAPTER III

BRILLIANT DAYS AT WEIMAR—GRAND DUCHESS MARIA PAULOWNA—AUGUSTA'S BIRTH AND EARLY YOUTH

As the scenery and appointments in the representation of historical dramas are frequently of hardly less importance than the actor who plays his part, so are the recollections of certain historical personages connected in a manner with definite surroundings.

Sans Souci reminds us of Frederick the Great; if we think of the Duke of Reichstadt our thoughts revert to Schönbrunn and the name of Austria; Maria Theresa carries us back with charm to her appearance at Pressburg; Malmaison is suggestive of Josephine of France, and Weimar forms the frame to the portrait of Augusta of Prussia.

If the early home should be our starting point when we wish to grasp the individuality of a life, this necessity is more than usually apparent in the case of the consort of William I., who ever re-

mained deeply attached to the land of her childhood. The place where she was born and which fostered the impressions of her youth, was a strong factor in her after development. As Weimar's daughter, she became the patroness of art and literature, and for that reason could never feel at home in Berlin, while the pupil of Goethe and the soldier-king were incapable of even understanding each other.

It was not only the general conception of "home" that bound her to Weimar, pleasant recollections and keen interest in the town accompanied her, and in every critical moment of her life, her thoughts reverted to it with pride, as she recalled each acquaintance whose attachment she had valued. And after her heavy sorrows and vicissitudes, she longed to revisit once again the never forgotton scenes of her childhood.*

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* In the beginning of 1888, the Empress went to Weimar for the last time from Babelsberg, visited every spot that had been dear to her as a child, and spent several hours in the Goethe Museum. On leaving she sent the following letter to the chief magistrate with a gift of money for the benefit of the town :

"I cannot leave my old home without expressing my hearty thanks for the sympathetic kindness which has been shown me on all sides. The shadows cast over my life justify my strong longing to revisit the house of my forefathers and verify the recollections of early days which I have never ceased to cherish and which meet me here at every turn. But I am not less interested in the progress of to-day, and sincerely rejoice to see the development of both

The castles of Weimar have always stood open to pioneers and men of note, and it is well known that in the eighteenth century, no royal favour was more helpful to the rich development of literature than the hospitality offered to Goethe, Schiller and their circle.

It was the Duchess Amelia that summoned Wieland to the Court, and her son Charles Augustus, who began his reign at the age of seventeen, also attracted many poets to the castle.

Goethe came towards the close of 1775, and at once gained the friendship and confidence of the young ruler; in 1776 he was made a Privy Councillor, and in 1782 all the most important branches of the Government were under his direction. Louise, the Duke's wife, at first distrusted the poet as an evil spirit that was

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town and country, which augurs well for future comfort. While sending you the enclosed gift in aid of the poor, I wish to express my sincere hope that the welfare of my native land may be permanent.

Belvedere Castle, Nr. Weimar, AUGUSTA."
Sep. 10th, 1888.

The reply of the Empress to the women of Weimar, who sent their congratulations to the daughter of their town on the occasion of the proclamation of the Emperor at Versailles in 1871, is equally cordial:

"I have rarely received a message which has inspired me with such deep grateful pleasure as the greeting of the women from the town of my birth. Yes, it is true that we daughters of Weimar

enticing her husband to undue love of pleasure and levity of conduct. But he very soon won not only her confidence, but that of the people as a beneficient minister, eager to promote economy in the State expenses, and to further the well being of the lower orders.

It was by his advice that Herder was invited to Weimar, and that in 1789 Schiller was appointed Professor in the University of Jena, which was certainly at its best under Charles Augustus, whose warm heart and artistic tastes attracted so many great intellects to his Court, and the works of Wieland, Goethe, Herder and Schiller serve as a memorial of the Duke and his government.

It has been said that when Goethe was describing Tasso's patron, the Duke of Ferrara, his justice, open-heartedness, and tact in assigning the most suitable tasks to each of those about

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have the privilege of looking back to many noble female characters, Amelia, Louise and Maria Paulowna. It is my duty to hold in high esteem the memory of my darling mother, but you who have sent me this welcome message may rest assured that I shall never fail in my cordial devotion to you."

The following is an extract from the reply to the citizens of Weimar, who sent their congratulations about the same date:

"When a princely house can point to such honourable names as those of my grandparents and parents, and when the land is united in one harmonious whole, true German sentiments cannot fail to strike their deepest roots, and I for my part shall ever think with gratitude of my native town."

him, he was painting an idealised portrait of his own benefactor, while the features of his poetical Leonore d' Este represented those of the Duchess Louise. And it is easy to gather that his warm and eloquent eulogy on Ferrara refers to the town of which he exclaims in another passage :

> "O Weimar, dir ward, ein besonderes Loos
> Wie Bethlehem in Juda, klein und gross."

It was into Weimar, a town of marked contrast with those of her own land, that the Grand Duchess Maria Paulowna of Russia made her entry, November 4th, 1804, as the consort of the Hereditary Duke, where the glory that had long been shining round the throne of her new home was still undimmed ; for though the reign of its many poets was drawing to a close, Herder was dead and Schiller was to be called away at an early age, Goethe, whose mighty genius eclipsed all others, was there in the zenith of his power, while to the aged Wieland it was granted "to lay the devotion and admiration for which no language could find suitable expression, at the feet of his exalted patroness."

Although Maria Paulowna did not develop her best powers until later on in life, she was even at this time a woman of no mean capacity. "She was," says her biographer, Preller, "sufficiently

clear and strong-minded to follow the subtle reasonings of men on points about which faith and science appear to be at variance; she had admiring respect for men of learning, and courted their society, taking the keenest interest in all progress and development."

People of royal birth are often judged by their gifts, and it was certainly in the power of Maria Paulowna, not only to satisfy, but to exceed every expectation, for eighty carts laden with costly treasures had followed in the train of the bridal carriage, and the ample means of the Imperial daughter of Russia enabled her to assist with a generous hand all who were in need. She attracted artists and scholars, as well as encouraged musicians, Hummel and others, to take up their residence in Weimar. She herself studied logic under the guidance of Professor Kästner, and attended a course of lectures on art given by the painter Meyer; in short, her keen active mind was always open to instruction and encouragement; she was eager for work and development, but there was far too little scope for her powers in the town of hardly 12,000 inhabitants, and accustomed as she was to the far wider field of an Imperial Court, she naturally felt restricted in her interests. But she was fortunate in the almost

adoring admiration of the people, her inner life as a happy wife, the warm-hearted reception she had met with from the venerable Dowager Duchess Amelia, as well as the loving guidance with which the Duchess Louise initiated her daughter-in-law into the details of her new position.

But sorrows were early at hand; Maria Paulowna lost her little son a year after his birth, then the war broke out, and the Emperor Alexander, fearing lest his sister should fall into the hands of Napoleon, insisted on her leaving Weimar. She fled first to Göttingen, accompanied by the Dowager Duchess and her husband, whom however she left to travel on alone to Schleswick, where she had relations with whom she stayed for nearly a year; then on her return, her eldest daughter, Marie, was born, February 3rd, 1808, and owing to the anxious unsettled times, the child was at once entrusted to the motherly care of the wife of Professor Batsch.

In this same year the famous Conference of Princes took place at Erfurt, which was attended by the Emperors Napoleon and Alexander, the Kings of Würtemberg, Bavaria, Westphalia, Saxony, and several other princes, where, too, the presence of the literary heroes, Goethe and Wieland contributed not a little to elate the

oppressor of Germany. Political reasons made it advisable for Maria Paulowna to be out of the way during these meetings, and she went to St. Petersburg, where she remained for a year, while cruel war was crushing the life out of Germany. On her return she was met by sorrow and poverty on all sides, and it is from this moment that her active beneficence became so widely felt, and in a later chapter we shall be able to trace the fruits of her influence, not only in her own land and times, but through her daughter in another and far more extended sphere.

. . . . . .

Augusta, the future Empress of Germany, was born September 30th, 1811, but her birth was coldly received, with disappointment that it was not an heir to the throne, and the lovely child seemed to be almost forgotten, though as Frau von Schiller remarked, she "lay as placid and calm in her cradle as if conscious of her future crown."

Rumours of further war hovered round the birth of the little one, and Napoleon's plans against Russia roused the alarm of the whole of Europe, as well as caused unspeakable sorrow to Maria Paulowna, who clung with unswerving devotion to her native land, where lived her mother and

beloved brothers and sisters, whom she visited again and again.

Her proud confidence in the strength of Russia made her more than hopeful that her native land could never succumb to the power of France, though up to this moment, experience had afforded little probability of the fulfilment of her wishes, and her fears about the issue of the war were cruelly prolonged by the imperfect means of communication at that time. In February, 1812, Weimar had to send its contingent of soldiers to the assistance of Napoleon, and the daily longing for news was only met by agonising uncertainty, while the months of waiting were perhaps more trying to Maria Paulowna than to any others. But one day, December 5th, 1812, as she was looking towards the town from one of the windows of the castle, she saw a sledge in front of a post-house with two officers in French uniform.

"Messengers from Russia," was her instant thought, as her heart beat violently. She was not mistaken, it was Napoleon himself, who was hastening to Erfurt on his retreat from Moscow, and had changed horses at Weimar.

Germany began to breathe more freely after this check to the power of France, and the following year was marked by its struggle for liberty.

Weimar belonged to the Confederation of the Rhine, and had to bide its time, but after the battle of Leipsic, Charles Augustus did not lag behind the others in issuing his call to arms.

The following is an expression characteristic of Maria Paulowna, as she was driving from the church where the soldiers had been assembled before starting: "Nothing pains me more than the thought that *I* may not share in the fight."

She was of an upright, frank enthusiastic disposition, free from pride and ostentation, winning the hearts of those about her, severe towards herself, and exacting the most rigid obedience to duty from her daughters, whom she wished to fit for the most honoured and exalted positions in life.

She was always present at their lessons, and personally guided them as to their behaviour in society. The Empress Augusta used to relate how as a child, she had been trained to entertain, to receive deputations, and to move gracefully past a row of chairs representing her subjects, which her mother had had arranged for the purpose.

The zeal of Maria Paulowna often drove her daughters to the verge of despair, but if they dared to complain of fatigue, she invariably rejoined with severity: "A princess is not permitted to be tired," and the remark was never

forgotten by Augusta, who inherited her mother's impetuous character and was the most gifted of the sisters, which accounts for the anxious efforts of the grand Duchess to develop her talents and to help her to acquire the quiet self-control which she herself had been obliged to learn in the school of the world; it had become second nature to her by constant practice, and Augusta tried to copy her mother, but the most strenuous efforts could only very slowly and with intense difficulty create qualities that were opposed to the natural disposition of the child. She loved and admired her mother, but as she always found it difficult to give expression to her feelings, Maria Paulowna was the object of her respect rather than of her confidence, and her gentler, more ingratiating sister Marie seemed to usurp her share of their parent's love, as well as that of the people; so that when they were together in the town or at the theatre, Augusta was frequently jealous of Marie who failed to understand her sister's disappointment.

Like all passionate natures, Augusta had a strong craving to love, and little girls of the town were often invited to the Court, though it also happened that she made friends with others not in her own circle, but in return for her confiding advances, the Princess only met with reserve or

humble submission to her will, never the devotion she longed for; and some years later, in a letter to Rudolf von Zastrow, (Chapter VI.) she was compelled to own that "princes are rarely blessed with real friends."

This unsatisfied longing for affection drove the child to self-concentration at an age when hearts are easily won, and made her find her keenest pleasure in study, because her teachers alone could understand and sympathise with her. The scholarly professor Weichhardt lectured for her, and Meyer the painter, author of a well-known German history of art, formed her taste; but Goethe himself exercised by far the strongest influence in her development, and from the time that she daily saw and conversed with the great thinker, she never wavered in her admiration of him, nor ceased to feel grateful pride that she had been privileged to sit at his feet. His friendship was the joy of her childhood, he grudged her no time nor any explanation that was necessary, even guiding her by a sign or a word in the "trivial round" of her daily life; he was her wise and helpful counsellor and always ready with a word of comfort when she was weary.

She was Goethe's special favourite, though all her masters were fond of her and felt themselves

inspired to renewed efforts by her zeal and constant craving for instruction. She lived the life of a student, and cared but little for that of the Court, to which she preferred the charms of literature and the history of the past. An heir to the throne of Weimar, Augusta's only brother, was born in 1818, and in 1824 Maria Paulowna took the children to St. Petersburg on a visit to their grandmother. Marie had already been, but Augusta made the journey for the first time, and it proved to be the only change in her young life, which was passed in strict monotony at Weimar, where the days and months sped onwards with clock-like precision, accentuated only by the same regular walks, the same reception hours, the same masters, and the periodical visits to Goethe, marked off by the same unvarying interval of time.

The mother and her daughters were received with becoming splendour, the Dowager Empress driving some miles from the capital to be the first to welcome them; the Emperor Alexander overwhelmed them with gifts, and the courtiers with flattery. But this glimpse into the unknown was distasteful to Augusta, and in fact both the princesses pined for the quiet of their own home. "God grant that this longing may always be yours," wrote Professor Hand, who

had accompanied them in the capacity of tutor. "You are behaving excellently, in spite of unusual indulgence and adulation; they say you look like angels from heaven, that you sing divinely, and so on."

Life was a little more lively after their return to Weimar, and relations visited them more frequently at the castles of Belvedere and Wilhelmsthal, where the grace of the young princesses began to attract attention.

The autumn of 1826 was marked by a visit from the Princes William and Charles of Prussia, and the engagement between the latter and the Princess Marie was announced at Christmas, to be followed by their marriage in May, 1827.

Then came a time of depression for the Princess Augusta, for although the two sisters had not always lived harmoniously together, still there was a feeling of loneliness, and the apartments they had shared seemed dreary and empty for one.

Just at this time, she was preparing for her confirmation, and when the day came for the rite to be administered, she felt cruelly alone in the absence of her parents.* The Court

* Augusta's confirmation took place, August 21st, 1827. After being present at the marriage of the Princess Marie in Berlin, her

Chaplain appealed earnestly to her on this occasion :

"Never forget, Princess, however exalted you may be over others in the future, that we have all one God, in whose sight there is no respect of persons nor difference of rank, who looks upon men solely as they *are*. . . . And wherever your lot may be cast, strive to dry the weeping eyes, to heal the wounds of pain and sorrow, and to make the lives of others bright and glad."

. . . . . .

The news of the sudden death of Charles Augustus, July 8th, 1828, recalled Charles Frederick and Maria Paulowna to Weimar. The Duke had gone to Berlin to see his little grandson, and also, as he wrote to Goethe, "to learn the news and at the same time to take leave as it were of the things of this world." He had enjoyed a few happy days at Glienicke, near Potsdam, where he had met Alexander von Humboldt who wrote :

"I never saw the great warm-hearted Prince more lively, humorous, benevolent and interested in the future development of the lower orders."

parents had left for St. Petersburg on a long visit to the Dowager Empress, with whom they remained uutil after the confirmation of their younger daughter.

Death claimed him a few days later, at the age of seventy-one, on the return journey from this visit. He had opened the window of the carriage for the sake of fresh air, and fell back immediately afterwards, quite dead, into the arms of his adjutant.

The change of ruler brought no perceptible difference, as Charles Frederick promised on his accession to the throne to follow rigidly in the footsteps of his father. Peace was reigning in the country, and in the Capital there was not the slightest political friction from one corner of the land to the other, and a descendant of Jonathan Swift, who was at Weimar at the time speaks of the life there as "irrestibly attractive," and concurs in the verdict that it may well be called "'the Athens of Germany,' rich in famous scholars in every branch of learning. The Grand Duke is the pattern of all men of note in art and science, and life at his Court is more free and untrammelled than anywhere else.'

Augusta was happy in this intellectual centre, and enjoyed the Court soirées, when she passed from one to another of the guests in a friendly affable manner, though directing her conversation especially to artists. She was still but half a child, still living in a world of dreams, and

therefore surprised by the advent of Prince William, who came to seek her hand. He had certainly made a favourable impression on his former visit to Weimar in company with his brother Charles, but he was considerably older than the Princess, who was nevertheless attracted by his manliness and self-reliance. She admired him for the heroic virtues attributed to him, while his unfortunate attachment to the Princess Radziwill only added to his charms; and she would have been no woman if she had not believed herself capable of effacing the recollection of any other in the man whom she loved. That a great gulf separated him from her, that insuperable differences lay between them, which even fifty years of married life failed to reduce to harmony—who could tell?

The Prince on his side appeared to be attracted by her grace, although her beauty was as yet hardly developed, and in Weimar it was believed that a couple had found each other suited in all points, with happiness in store for their whole life. The promise of marriage was given, October 19th, 1828, and the betrothal celebrated February 16th, 1829. In accordance with the custom of the Prussian Court, the wedding had to take place in Berlin, and on June 7th, of the same

year, Prince William arrived in Weimar to fetch his bride. She paid a visit to Goethe on the previous evening, and probably confided all her uneasy fears to her old friend, for long after she had left him, the poet sat deep in thought, and then said gently and sorrowfully: "May she be happy in the great restless world which she is about to enter."

CHAPTER IV

WEDDING FESTIVITIES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS. BEGINNING OF LIFE IN BERLIN.

The preparations for the marriage had followed closely on the announcement of the engagement, because the Emperor Nicholas of Russia, who had ascended the throne on the death of his brother Alexander in 1825, had expressed the wish to be present at the wedding of his niece with his brother-in-law.*

Travelling was a very different matter in those days, before our railway system had embraced the whole of Europe, and the trifling journey from Weimar to Berlin was then both long and wearisome.

It was Whitsunday, 1828, and after the bridal pair, with the parents of the Princess, had attended morning service, Prince William left the Castle in an open carriage, amid the jubilant shouts of the crowd, tall and martial looking with a fresh

* He had married Charlotte, the eldest daughter of Frederick William III.

open countenance that might well win the sympathy of all beholders.

An hour later, the Princess stepped into a travelling carriage, decorated with garlands of roses and drawn by six piebalds, accompanied by her ladies, and preceded by Hussars and huntsmen with their bands; after the carriage rode the gentleman whose duty it was to hand over the bride to the Prussian authorities. Then came the suites of the Grand Duchess and the Dowager Grand Duchess, including foresters, masters of the horse and more court huntsmen. In spite of the pouring rain, thousands of the inhabitants had congregated to strew roses in the path of the bride and to shout a last tearful farewell to their Princess, who was leaving her country with mingled feelings of deep emotion. Matrimony was not merely the beginning of a fresh era in her existence, it was life itself to the inexperienced girl of seventeen, leaving the shelter of her quiet home.

Triumphal arches had been erected in every village through which she had to pass, and in spite of their number and the fatigue of the journey, the Princess had to speak kindly words to the deputations, smile and show gratitude for all these demonstrations. She crossed the

Prussian frontier on foot and was met by the Prince on the very threshold of his native land; he was at hand too at every place where a reception was awaiting her, in order to lessen the fatigue which however half killed her long before the termination of her journey.

The first day brought her to Merseburg, the second to Wittenberg, and on the third she reached Potsdam, where the Crown Princess Elizabeth received her new sister-in-law, and Prince William took a short leave of his bride, who made her ceremonial entry into the capital the following day by the side of the Crown Princess. Dense crowds lined the route and ceaselessly cheered the Princess, admired her gilt coach, the horses with their magnificent plumes, the singular scarlet costumes of the coachmen and of the pages who, according to ancient custom at the Prussian Court, balanced themselves in a half standing, half kneeling position on the steps of the gala carriage. The Burgomaster of Berlin met her between Charlottenberg and the city, and presented her with an address, which the Princess acknowledged with a gift.

The wedding ceremony followed, June 11th, when generals, ministers, diplomatists and ladies

assembled at half past six in the evening in the Hall of Knights, or so-called "White Hall" of the Castle, while the royal family and guests of princely rank met in the large drawing-room of Frederick I. at seven o'clock. When all the family had taken their places, a crown was brought in and handed to the first lady in waiting, from whom the Crown Princess received it and placed it on the head of Augusta, where it was made secure by the assistance of the Empress of Russia and the Grand Duchess of Weimar. Then, on a sign from the King to the Master of the Ceremonies, the procession formed, headed by pages, who were followed by gentlemen in waiting in gold embroidered uniforms, and other Court officials. They passed through the "White Hall" and several adjoining rooms to the Chapel, where the Bishop and chaplains came forward to receive the bridal pair.

Prince William wore a General's uniform with the orange ribbon of the order of the Black Eagle. Augusta's gown was of interwoven silk and silver, with a train covered with sprigs of myrtle, while her regal crown sparkled with over a hundred brilliants of the purest water. After a short address from one of the clergy, the bride and bridegroom exchanged rings, at the same

moment the firing of cannon announced that the union had taken place, and the procession began solemnly to return through the "White Hall" to the inner apartments of the Castle. The last of the guests had barely passed, when the servants, under the direction of the Lord Steward, hastened to arrange the tables and load them with flowers, gold and silver plate and glass, while the bride and bridegroom were receiving their innumerable congratulations. Then the royal family, princely guests, numerous generals in command and foremost officials were accommodated with seats at the banquet, while all others had to stand at the buffets arranged in an adjoining room.

Then came a grand concert, followed by a ball to be opened with a "torch dance" in which Augusta and her husband had first to make the round of the room in a solemn polonaise, carrying lighted wax tapers and preceded by the Court officials and Ministers of State. This done, the Princess had to dance incessantly, first with the Emperor of Russia, next with the King, and afterwards with all the Grand Dukes, Dukes and Princes, according to their rank; finally, with many other partners connected with the Court Circle.

We might think that this ceaseless dancing

would alone have been sufficient to exhaust the Princess, whose nerves had previously been tried by a fatiguing journey, by a succession of fresh impressions, deputations and speeches; but all this formed but a portion of the wedding ceremonies which had taxed the strongest nerves for centuries, and it was not until after her crown had been handed back to the Royal Treasurer, and that Augusta had distributed portions of her garters, that the bridal pair were at length able to retire to their rooms.

Early the following morning, they took possession of the house which the King had assigned to them, on the threshold of which they were received by their suite and servants. A few hours later, the Imperial family of Russia, the Royal family of Prussia, the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Weimar, and other Princes and Princesses, arrived for luncheon, and at four o'clock, the military and civil officials and diplomatists waited upon the newly married pair, who finished the day by being present at a gala performance at the Opera.

The countless festivities that followed, were really arranged in honour of the Russian Imperial family, but were of course attended by Prince William and his bride.

We have already remarked that Augusta's real beauty had hardly developed, and it is certain that the gowns she was compelled to wear, did not suit her, so that the lovely stately Empress of Russia completely eclipsed her sister-in-law, who day by day became more pale and exhausted with the life of excitement for which she was not sufficiently strong. She was neither at home nor at her ease in this vortex, where all was so new to her, and life at a Court so much greater than that of Weimar, made her nervous and hesitating, in spite of all her efforts to hide her embarrassment. She had looked for happiness in her marriage, but the mutual life of these early days which ought to have laid the foundation for genuine intercourse between husband and wife, had been taken up with wearying festivities which had marred all her previous illusions. She had really many points of attraction, for she was clever and refined, and even if she had been less good-looking than she was, her youth and dependence upon him ought to have won the heart of Prince William, and drawn her closer to him. But he did not appreciate her worth, and his own characteristic plainness of manner had no sympathy with her formal ways. "It may be," says Stuart Mill,

"that opposites attract each other, but it is only harmony that can unite them." And William and Augusta were not only diametrically opposed to each other by disposition, but their points of view were dissimilar, and persistently maintained by both. This was apparent from the first months of their marriage, and their want of agreement only increased as years rolled by.

From the very beginning, Augusta hardly existed for the Prince as a woman of intellect, he had neither appreciation nor comprehension of what she loved and valued, he did not even know what interested her, nor did he ever make the least effort to understand her thoughts and ideas. His own were absolutely absorbed with military matters, and so slight was his understanding for science and literature, that when he was asked to consent to the erection of a statue to the brothers Humboldt, in the capital, he agreed, but added:

"Though not so big as those of my generals."

And when the memorial to Goethe was unveiled, the monarch, who never missed a review, was conspicuous by his absence, though he watched the proceeding through his field-glass from a mound in Bismarck's garden.

Goethe had not been a soldier, and the Emperor did not consider he could be expected to view the ceremony more closely.

Few men have been more attractive in their old age than William I., his goodness then was beyond all praise; but as a young man, he was far from amiable, and his behaviour as a husband was by no means exemplary. It is said that soon after their marriage, the young wife became aware of his irregular conduct, and appealed to her father-in-law to use his influence with his son. But the old man only looked at her with a sly smile, and patting her cheek, observed:

"If you expect a model of virtue in your husband, you should not have married a Hohenzollern."

The romantic clinging to the memory of Elise Radziwill never stood in the way of his ardent, certainly not always platonic, admiration for the fair sex, especially for ladies of the theatre, and if ever the recollections of Pauline Lucca, for instance, should be published, they must certainly contain a detailed chapter on his appreciation of life behind the scenes.

But far more uncomfortable than these amorous episodes of the stage, which did not always reach the ears of his wife, was the fact

that he forced her to receive women in close intercourse, for whom she had no respect, and it was an especial trial to have a lady attached to her Court, who was the object of his attentions for years. The strongest affection can scarcely cover such want of harmony in habits and opinions, and on William's side there was no love in compensation. With the confidence of youth, Augusta had dreamt of devotion, where she had met with cool forbearance, she had looked for common interests, but in a man who yawned when she spoke of literature, and considered her far too young and insignificant to be entrusted with his own plans and aspirations. And just as there was no common ground on which husband and wife could meet, the life of the Court too offered her no encouragement.

During the festivities of the early days, she had pined for peaceful home life, but when on the departure of the Imperial visitors from Prussia, everything had returned to its usual groove, she felt no happier than before.

On the day of her entry, she had seen Berlin en fête and the court in dazzling magnificence and splendour, but the capital in everyday life was anything but attractive, and she looked in vain for some trace of individuality behind the

monotonous rows of houses that lined the long broad streets of the comparatively new city, which to her eyes was already looking faded and withered.

The royal household of Frederick William III. showed itself in its true colours, and with painful disappointment to the bride, as soon as the excitement of the festivities had passed away. The King was extremely simple in his habits, and the splendour he displayed on the occasion of the first visit of his eldest daughter to her old home, had been quite an exception at his modest Court, the whole tone of which was so plain and homely, that when she visited her father in 1832, at the Castle of Fischbach in Silesia, he received her absolutely without ceremony.

"You surely don't wish me to put myself out of the way for my own daughter," he said, and the Empress asked for nothing further, if only the King was in a good humour.

An episode connected with this visit may be mentioned here :—

The officers of a neighbouring garrison town were invited to the Castle, as well as the rising star Henriette Sontag, whom the King requested to sing for the entertainment of his guests, to be followed by dancing. But in spite of the easy

friendly tone that prevailed, the captains and lieutenants who were the partners of the Empress and Princesses, were naturally a little shy and nervous, while probably for fear of offending royalty, not one of them ventured to approach Henriette Sontag. The King became aware of the circumstance, and summoning his chief gentleman in waiting, Count Wilhelm Redern, he ordered him to procure a partner for Fräulein Sontag. The Count replied that he had been trying to introduce one for some time, but in vain, as nobody would dance with her, but he added that he was quite ready to set a good example and would immediately solicit the pleasure himself.

The Count and his partner joined the quadrille in which the Empress of Russia was dancing, but it was hardly over, before the Russian Master of the Household inquired since when it had been the custom in European Courts to allow opera-singers to dance in the same quadrille as the Empress of all the Russias.

"It is not usual," replied Redern, "but by command of the King."

Economy was always a delight to the Hohenzollerns and it certainly was the order of the day at the Court of Frederick William III.,

where, unless family festivities obliged him to display the treasures of his house, and the gala liveries of his servants, everything was mean, monotonous, and painfully tedious.

Just as the members of the house of Hohenzollern were wanting in the nobility of appearance that distinguishes ancient royal races, so were they for the most part deficient in the power of appreciating any of the amenities of life. Its princes had not only the stature and broad shoulders of the Brandenburg peasants, but they looked upon politeness as cowardice, which was little less then a sin in the eyes of the family.

After the death of Queen Louise, the King had entered into a morganatic marriage with one of the ladies of the Court, whom he raised to the rank of Princess Liegnitz, and whoever wished to stand well with the old man was bound to amiability towards this lady, but Augusta ignored the Princess, and was far too truthful to pretend to feelings that were not genuine.

The daughters * of Frederick William III., very rarely visited their old home, and when they came they appear to have infinitely preferred the Crown Princess Elizabeth to the wife of Prince

* Charlotte, Empress of Russia, Alexandrine, Duchess of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and Louise, Princess of the Netherlands.

William, who, in spite of her excellent bringing up, had never learnt to accommodate herself graciously to distasteful surroundings. The Crown Princess took a violent dislike to her, and she herself was a general favourite, but then she was the future Queen, with whom it was policy to be on the best of terms. The blame for the friction between the sisters-in-law is always cast upon Augusta, who could not show a smiling face when her heart was sore with disappointment; besides she was utterly wanting in the calm self-possession and evenness of temper necessary for life before the world. There was much that was repugnant to her in this Court, pervaded as it was by the smell of gunpowder, combined with an odour of sanctity. She was intolerant and had oveweening pride of birth without the strength to keep it in check when she behaved as though the members of the Prussian royal family were barely her equals. The grand-daughter of a Russian Emperor and of Charles Augustus of Weimar, in whose veins flowed moreover the blood of the Hohenzollerns * never doubted her right to compare herself with the greatest; and it is known that before she became Queen, she never

* His mother was niece to Frederick the Great.

signed a letter without adding in addition to her name: "Née Princess of Saxe-Weimar."

Love and affection had been dealt out to her but sparingly in her childhood, yet she was unfitted for a sunless life; the more lonely and forsaken she felt amid her new surroundings, the more frequently she reverted in thought to her old home, where countless interests were always at hand, and where she only needed to ask a question to receive a clever satisfying reply; but in Berlin and Potsdam she became daily more timid and reserved. Existence here seemed to her both unsympathetic and prosaic, without a breath of intellectual life, and she missed the daily proofs of goodwill so dear to a woman's heart. The contrast between the little Court of Weimar with its famous literary traditions and the military court, which was now her home, rendered the memories of her early youth, only the more acute. Her new acquaintances at first met her with an indulgent smile, then tried to change her views and damp her natural ardour, forgiving her, where she felt that pardon was out of place, and when she found that it was impossible for her to bring over her opponents to her way of thinking, she had neither the worldly wisdom nor the patience to be silent and

submit; besides, every disparaging remark about things that were to her of the highest importance, was looked upon as a personal slight.

No definite duties had been assigned to her at the court, although she might have made herself useful to her husband, and have created a more bearable existence, if she had taken the trouble to make herself more acceptable. Those who knew her in her advanced years could with difficulty picture a time when she was unmindful of consideration towards others, whom as a young woman she tried by sulkiness and outbreaks of irritability, and frequently pained by sudden transitions from liveliness to ill-temper, from apathy to anger, which is so often apparent in discontented women.

CHAPTER V

BIRTH OF FREDERICK III.—PRINCESS LOUISE AND THE NURSE-MAID—COURT UNDER FREDERICK WILLIAM IV.—REVOLUTION AND FLIGHT—POLITICAL FRICTION—BANISHMENT TO COBLENTZ.

WHILE cholera was raging in Berlin, and the royal family had fled to the different castles in the neighbourhood, during a period of deep anxiety and apprehension, on October 18th, 1832, a prince was born in the new palace at Potsdam, "our Fritz," as the Berliners called him, who later on became the Emperor Frederick III.

The Crown Prince and the Crown Princess had hitherto had no child in their three years of married life, and the expected event was anticipated with intense excitement, as it was probable that a son would be the heir to the throne. The young mother had had so many illusions in the early days of her marriage which had all been dispelled, that it seemed as though nothing but disappointment could be in store for her; however, in spite of their dissimilarity in character and the

complete absence of intuition between husband and wife, the years following the birth of their son, if not happy, were apparently not worse than those shared by so many wives.

The Prince's position in the army had strong claims upon him, and naturally prevented much home intercourse; then the increasing infirmities of his father often made him unable to appear, and his sons had to represent him, while William was frequently sent as his messenger to foreign courts, as well as deputy at the grand reviews of the troops. When able to be at home, he showed himself a tender father, and if not loving to his wife, he was much more considerate than formerly. They drove out together when the prince took the reins, with Augusta by his side, and at their feet little Fritz, whose singular beauty and friendly manner won all hearts.

It seemed as though he would prove to be their only child, but on December 3rd, 1838, a daughter, Louise, was born, who soon became her father's darling, and an incident connected with the early childhood of the Grand Duchess of Baden testifies to the kind forbearance of her parents towards their servants.

The little three-year old Princess had just returned from a drive, when the nurse in charge

seems to have failed in her duty, and instead of seeing that the child was safe in front of her, allowed her to follow her into the room, when the Princess rushed to the window, which was open, fortunately on the first floor, and fell out. It has never been made quite clear whether she fell into the arms of a passing apprentice, or into those of the sentry on watch, walking backwards and forwards in front of the Castle; but it is certain that one or other of them caught her, and that not a hair of her head was hurt. The nurse was not dismissed, indeed neither father nor mother even reproached her for her carelessness, "for," they argued, "as God has preserved our child, we have no right to punish a human being for the misfortune which might have befallen her."

But though the relations between Augusta and William were not without family joy while the children were small, the intercourse with the Court circle was not better, rather worse than before.

I have hinted that the Princess stood alone, but it is nevertheless evident that she was at first welcomed with the politeness of the great world, that complaisance which imitates sympathy, and can for a time flatter even a strong longing for appreciation.

Augusta was too clear sighted to mistake false coin for true, and with the bitter feelings of loneliness had come displeasure against the whole Court, but although she was always somewhat retiring, in the beginning it must have been her own fault that she so obviously withdrew herself, and it would have been wiser and more amiable, if she had condescended to mask her feelings. But now, instead of striking out a fresh path, with the new dignity of motherhood, she shewed herself prouder than ever; she had formerly been hesitating, nervous, uncertain of her ground, now she could raise her head with confidence, and though she was not loved, she was at least more respected than before.

Her father-in-law died June 7th, 1840, and crowds assembled at the funeral of a King who had passed through so many vicissitudes with his people that they were unable to contemplate their loss without deep feelings of sorrow. But strong as their attachement had been to the father, the hopes with which they greeted his eldest son were still greater, for he would surely fulfil the promise of a Constitutional government which Frederick William III. had given when the nation rose *en masse* to cast off the yoke of the oppressor. The first act of the new sovereign

was to grant a pardon to all political offenders, an act which seemed to stir the multitude as with the refreshing breath of spring.

Life at Court became quite brilliant and the fantastic King surrounded himself with a state and magnificence unheard of by those who recalled his father's penuriousness, while even artists and poets were invited to the Capital.

The day following the interment of the old King, Frederick William IV. gave his brother the title of "Prince of Prussia," created him Governor of Pomerania and Commander in Chief of the Prussian infantry.

But those who expected to see the Prince and his consort occupy a more important position at Court, had calculated without reference to Elisabeth, who had no sooner become Queen, than she openly avowed her real sentiments towards her sister-in-law whom she barely tolerated, and whom she treated with absolute scorn on every public occasion, a proof of which is furnished by the following incident:

The Princess of Prussia, herself a good musician and an ardent admirer of Meyerbeer, whose compositions she patronised, was unwilling to miss a performance at the Opera, if she believed that the King and Queen would be

unable to attend; but if they were expected, she always remained at home.

It happened one evening that Augusta had gone to the Opera to hear one of Meyerbeer's works, when the Queen unexpectedly appeared, at once perceived her sister-in-law and said to a gentleman-in-waiting:

"Announce to the Princess that I wish her to retire."

Augusta quietly caught up her train and observed to the lady in attendance upon her, as she left the house:

"It is lamentable that the only lady in the land whose high position permits her to insult me, should avail herself of the privilege."

The intercourse between her and Frederick William IV. was not quite so strained, although she was no favourite with her brother-in-law, whose prejudiced mind, overclouded by the mysticism and romanticism of the middle ages, had nothing in common with her healthy tone of thought, and there was as little possibility of unity with him as with the Queen. His vanity and his adherence to the pietistic movements in the Church were an annoyance to her, his terrible intemperance and consequent indisposition evoked comments far from flattering, while his

truth-loving sister-in-law was at no pains to conceal her own opinion of him.

The relations between her and the King are illustrated by a historical anecdote, which at the time obtained credence throughout the whole of Germany. The Prince and Princess of Prussia were present on an occasion when Frederick William IV. treated the Archbishop of Cologne with more familiarity than monarchs are accustomed to use even towards high dignitaries of the Church, and Augusta is said to have exclaimed loud enough to be heard by the bystanders :

"Extremely unkingly!"

There was no scope at Court for her energy, no use for the abilities which she possessed, and yet her active mind craved for exercise, and in her friendless condition for somebody to whom she could be helpful. She resolved therefore to create her own interests, as she was systematically debarred from those to which she had every right.

Her husband was busy with public affairs, besides devoting himself zealously to all the military duties connected with his position. He was frequently absent from the capital, and when he was at home, his simple hard-working habit were never in touch with social life.

Augusta instituted receptions in her own apartments, musical-evenings when Meyerbeer conducted, or tea-parties when Alexander von Humboldt was the honoured guest of the hour. She kept up a close relationship with Weimar, and invited the poet Raupach to remove to Berlin and give courses of historical lectures.

It was in her salons that Jenny Lind made her *début* in Germany, and at once took the company by storm, in spite of her modest appearance and obscurity. Liszt too was among her musicians. Geibel, Auberbach and Ernst Curtius, whom the Princess chose to be tutor to her son, were her frequent guests. She was devoted to drawing* and her board was rarely out of her hand, even at her receptions. She

* In addition to the numerous examples of her proficiency in drawing and painting which visitors can see in the royal Castles at Berlin, Babelsberg and Coblentz, three of her works have been exhibited: 1. Leaves from the Wartburg, (1863). 2. Church decorations (the joint work of herself and the Grand Duchess of Baden, exhibited in Berlin in 1865). 3. Views on the Rhine near Coblentz.

The first named work was familiar to all who visited the spot, as it was on sale for the benefit of the poor. It consists of seven miniature paintings with explanations referring to the history of the Wartburg. The Empress also gained more than one "succès d'estime" as a musical composer, and is especially known by her March ("No. 102") which is played by the German Military bands under the name of "The Empress Augusta's March." She also composed the music for a ballet, "Die Maskerade."

placed herself at the head of a scientific association in Berlin, in connection with which lectures were delivered every Thursday by celebrated professors, which she continued to attend, both as Queen and Empress, and to all these, poets and men of learning whom she liked to gather round her, she exhibited the gracious amiability of which she was so eminently capable, when it suited her. Authors of the period spoke of the intellectual versatility which distinguished her from all the other ladies of the royal family, and Sternberg, who was intimately acquainted with the Court, remarks in his Memoirs that the Princess William of Prussia seemed to him and to many others to represent "the soul of all mental life at the Court."

The hopes that had been centred in Frederick William IV. were dissipated as years went by, and the liberal party who predicted the well-being of Prussia from a constitutional government were quick to perceive that the King had too much appreciation of royal power "by Divine right" to be willing to accede to the wishes of the nation.

Although no friend to the people, and far from popular, the Princess Augusta was opposed to the Court party in her political views which

were those of her early life in Weimar, where Charles Augustus had been the first of the German princes to adopt a free constitution, and his grand-daughter took no pains to hide her sympathy with the moderate liberals. We are told that she repeatedly urged her brother-in-law to give way and thus prevent a revolution as she exclaimed in her eagerness, "He has no children," while she alone realised the dangerous game that he was playing with the hereditary rights of her son.

Early in 1848 signs of serious revolt became apparent in Prussia, aggravated by scarcity and high prices, which culminated in the bloody street riots of March 15th and 16th. On the morning of the 18th, a deputation waited on the King to demand a change of ministry and a liberal government which he promised to concede, and there seemed to be every prospect of peace again. Then the report of two shots was heard, and even at the present day it is not known if they were fired intentionally or not. Nobody was hurt, but the signal for the Revolution had been given, and the fury of the mob aroused. They thought they had been entrapped, and in the course of a few hours the streets were barricaded and terrible blood-

shed ensued; in their fury the masses immediately laid all blame on the military leaders, and made Prince William responsible for all that was occurring. He and his family had hastened to the Castle, but short as the distance was from their own house, they were made to feel the burning ill-will of the populace, to see their contemptuous and hateful looks and to hear the shouts of insult and opprobrium which they dared not resent. The more violent clamoured for the banishment of the Prince and the exclusion of himself and his descendants from the throne, while the street fights that had begun in the afternoon were ruthlessly carried on through the night, till towards morning, when the King at last ordered the soldiers to withdraw, and bloodshed practically ceased, though men's minds were as excited as before.

Prince William rode away at the head of his troops, his son left the Castle in a coach under military escort, and Augusta returned home, not without danger, as she heard threats from the crowd that made her hair stand on end. But her own palace was no safe hiding-place, and she naturally thought seriously of flight, as the jubilant masses, intoxicated by their victory, and blinded by hate, attacked the Prince's house like fiends.

After a few hasty words to the household, William and his wife made their escape by a back door into a side street and hurried on foot to a distant quarter of the city called "Karlsbad," where lived the wife of a Privy Councillor, von Schleinitz, who had been an intimate friend of Prince William in their youth. This proved to be the best step he could have taken, for the fugitive Prince would have been no welcome guest in any other house, and this lady simply followed the instinct of her devotion towards him. She made him put on the uniform of a general, which she had kept in memory of her father, and then under the name of Herr and Frau von Schleinitz, William and Augusta drove away in a close carriage to the fortress of Spandau, the Privy Councillor himself being seated on the box disguised in his own livery. Just as the vehicle was turning at full speed round one corner, the mob burst into the house from the other side, and ransacked it from top to bottom, to the consternation of its mistress; but as they failed to unearth the Prince either in the attics or in the cellars, they at length came to the conclusion, that he was hidden elsewhere, and the wild horde rushed away to search in some other likely quarter.

On his birthday, March 22nd, Prince William fled by way of Hamburg to England to shelter there until the storm should blow over, leaving his wife and children at Potsdam. But angry looks followed Augusta even here, and she many a time recalled the words of her husband in those days. "Accustom yourself to humility, for the throne is tottering." The events of March had rendered it necessary for the heir apparent to absent himself from Berlin, but when the question of a new government came under discussion, it was advisable that he should be on the spot and he was recalled after a couple of months. His wife and children met him at Magdeburg, and they all arrived at Potsdam together, June 7th, though they did not remove to the capital until the autumn, after spending the summer at Babelsberg.

It was no peaceful quiet life that awaited them then, though after experiencing so much persecution and anxiety, one would have thought it would have been easier for husband and wife to understand each other and fight the battle of life together, but no sooner had they returned to their old home, than they again entered on their former separate existence, while the cool relationship between the King and

Queen, as well as that between the Prince and Princess continued as before.

In 1848 a German National Assembly had met at Frankfurt to discuss the question of a new German Empire, and on April 13th of the following year, a deputation waited on Frederick William IV. who curtly declined to accept the proffered crown. The thought of Prussia as an Imperial Power could hardly have been indifferent to him, but he would not agree to it, unless he could rely upon a unanimous election. His brother was far more enthusiastic and eager about the matter, and even Augusta on this occasion, warmly shared in the views of her husband.

In the evening of the day that the deputation had been dismissed by the King, its members waited upon Prince William, and Laube, who was present, thus speaks of the interview.

"It would have been easy to find a hearty appreciation of an Imperial German Federal State with this royal couple, and Prince William's candid speaking was encouraging, while the Princess won all hearts by her understanding sympathy in the welfare of the Fatherland."

"The Princess," says Biedermann, likewise a member of the deputation, a woman whose heart

and intellect are at one, whose political insight is probably the clearest, and whose keen feeling of devotion to the Fatherland the warmest at the Court of Berlin, entreated me with deep emotion not to despair as regards our mission, nor prematurely to relinquish our negotiations. It was bound to succeed, the aim was so splendid, so necessary."*

She had previously blamed her brother-in-law for his vacillating policy, but the breach between them became far more serious after the proceedings of this day, and the Court were not a little astonished when the Princess, at some ceremony to which it had been impossible to omit inviting this "enfant terrible," complained of the shipwreck of every effort to promote a political union, and expressed herself in a loud voice concerning "this poor divided Germany."

After the Convention of Olmütz, in November 1850, when a German Confederation was agreed upon under the presidency of Austria, the influence of Prussia declined, and the cowardly policy which had brought about its disgrace exasperated Prince William, who at this time was quite as unpopular as his wife, both with

* Beseler speaks in the same terms, and eulogises the courtesy of the Princess, her grace and ardent patriotism.

the Government and at Court. His displeasure with this feeble policy was characterised as unwarrantable interference, and the dissension between the brothers finally became so violent that in a fit of anger, William is said to have delivered up his sword to the King who banished him to Coblentz, although his exile was veiled under an appointment as Governor and General of the 8th Regiment.

But even here he was persecuted and molested in numberless petty ways, and incredible as it seems, he was unwittingly under the surveillance of the secret police. During his short but frequent visits to the capital, he never ceased to maintain that Prussia ought to strive to regain her former position, and on the breaking out of the Crimean War, he loudly advocated a warlike policy, to which the Prussians agreed, and crowds of enthusiasts swarmed in front of the palace, which they had intended to storm a few years previously, but this time to overwhelm the Prince with their ovations, and urge what they knew that he too longed for, an alliance with the Western Powers. But they appealed to deaf ears, Frederick William IV. was determined to maintain his neutrality, every member of the Court was opposed to England,

and the Queen never lost an opportunity of trampling under foot every law of hospitality and politeness towards the English Embassy.

Lady Blomfield, the wife of the Ambassador at that time, relates in her Memoirs that in March, 1854, she and her husband were giving a ball for the Hereditary Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and that as Prussian etiquette required the presence of royalty at any festival given to a member of their family, it was naturally expected that the King and Queen would appear.

During dinner, Frederick William asked his wife at what o'clock she intended to leave for the Embassy.

"I don't know that I shall go at all," she rejoined.

"You *must* go," answered the King, and at ten o'clock their Majesties arrived, and were met at the foot of the stairs by the Ambassador and Lady Blomfield. The Queen took the arm of Lord Blomfield, and his wife followed with the King.

Elizabeth was especially ungracious and the only words she addressed to her companion were: "Your stairs are very steep, my Lord," while Lady Blomfield had not the slightest notice taken of her during the whole evening. The King

wished to remain to supper, but the Queen insisted on leaving, drew on her cloak and went into the corridor, but she had to send three times to her husband to beg him to join her, before he chose to obey her behest.

At a dinner party in Potsdam a few days subsequently, Lady Blomfield was sitting by the King, the Hereditary Grand Duke of Meiningen was between the Queen and the wife of the English Secretary of Legation, Sir Augustus Loftus, when Elisabeth questioned her neighbour closely about the English army and the movements of the fleet, to which the Prince replied in detail; after which, her Majesty suddenly turned towards Lady Loftus and exclaimed:

"How in the world can your government think of making war against Russia? England is so small and Russia so big."

Lady Loftus replied with gentle tact that this was hardly the moment in which to discuss the relative war footing of nations, and that it would be best to wait and watch the issue of the contest.

CHAPTER VI

AUGUSTA AS MOTHER—LIFE ON THE RHINE.

I BEGAN an earlier chapter by remarking that among the female characters that surrounded William I, it seems but natural to pass over his wife, in order to dwell with greater length upon his mother. It was otherwise with his son and successor for ninety days, and the influence exercised by Princess Victoria over her husband was well known in Germany long before he became Emperor as Frederick III. But evident as this power was, we should commit a grave error if we were to forget his mother, from whom he inherited, not only his strong resemblance in features and traits of character, but whose tastes he also largely shared. Pastor Godet and Professor Curtius, tutors to Frederick III, to whom she unfolded her own views on his education, have testified to the value of the guidance of his mother, who made herself conversant with the different branches of his studies

and arranged every detail that could promote the efficient training of his powers.

The future Field Marshal and Minister of War, Count Roon, to whom the Prince's military education had been entrusted, likewise speaks of her unselfish devotion in the fulfilment of her duty, and Major von Griesheim, in whose regiment the young Prince served, mentions in one of the papers an interview that he had with her.

"About the time that the young Prince entered the regiment," he says, "I received a command to wait on the Princess of Prussia, and I am bound to do her the justice to state that she never allowed her solicitude as a mother for his ease and comfort to stand in the first place. On the contrary, she begged me not to spare him, but to make him understand the full seriousness of service and to let him judge of the difficulties entailed on a * conscientious discharge of military duties.

It was her son that stood nearest to her

* Geibel, who had the opportunity of observing Augusta in private life with her children, when he was a frequent guest, wrote in 1847 : "The sensible, excellent bringing up of Prince Frederick based on the sound theory that he is not to grow up in royal seclusion, but as a man among men, justifies our expectation that he will one day prove an ornament to the throne."

heart, and who felt an attachment for his mother which his wife's somewhat imperious affection was never able to efface; though circumstances rendered it impossible for him to be much with her. He was sent at an early age to the University of Bonn and was frequently absent on military service, besides which, his youthful marriage separated him to a certain extent from both father and mother.

It seems but natural that the daughter should have made up to Augusta for any lack of affection that she met with from other quarters, but she and Princess Louise hardly understood each other at this time. Before her death, the Empress used to call the Grand Duchess of Baden "the sunbeam of her life," but now the daughter was far more attached to her father, whom she understood, and who unreservedly requited his daughter's tender devotion.

Augusta followed in the footsteps of her own mother in the bringing up of her children, as in all other points, and just as Maria Paulowna gained the esteem rather than the confidence of her girls, so had Augusta in a still higher degree acquired the respect, far more than the trustful devotion of Louise.

If, when she was a small child, her father

appeared in the school-room, the seriousness of study melted to nothing, in the presence of his kindly look and smile; the Princess climbed on to his knee, or her father took her up in his arms, and before the teacher had time to grasp the situation, the Prince was trotting round the room with his child, or playing at horses with her. It was a much more serious matter if the door opened to admit the Princess of Prussia, when Louise involuntarily drew herself up to her full height, and sat stiff and constrained as for her portrait, while she inwardly trembled lest her answers should prove incorrect. Her father's visit to the school-room was a ray of sunshine, but her mother's presence filled her with awe.

Still, if the relations between mother and daughter at this time were far from being loving, we must not overlook the fact that Augusta taught her child that she was not to spare herself. "It is usual," said Professor Neander, who was examining her prior to confirmation, "to put on silken gloves in dealing with young girls, and if one has to do with a princess, to put on even a second pair of velvet. But the examination which the Princess Louise had to undergo was so severe that I was troubled on her account over every question that I put to her—."

In order to obviate as far as possible the one-sidedness of exclusive instruction, a companion pupil was provided for both Prince Frederick and his sister. Clara von Griesheim was Louise's schoolfellow and the two fought their way bravely through irregular French verbs and the higher branches of arithmetic, which the Princess was never able to understand. The simple minded royal daughter was attached to her companion, and when Clara's joyous nature occasionally broke through the restraints of etiquette and roused the wrath of the rigid Princess Augusta, the daughter would summon up her courage and break a lance in vindication of her lively friend.

Rudolf von Zastrow, the companion of her brother, spent many years in the family circle of the Prince and Princess, and we can understand the solicitude of Augusta for the boy confided to her care from the following letter which she wrote to him in 1847, after he had left them :

" My dear Rudolf,

I am writing these few lines the evening preceding the day on which your examinations are to begin, in anxiety and uneasiness which have their root in the motherly feelings which I entertain towards you.

Your parents confided you to our care, and I

grasped from the first moment the magnitude of our responsibility coupled with deep gratitude for the trust reposed in us. I have always looked upon you and treated you as my own child, and God who sees into our hearts knows my attachment as well as my solicitude for you. He has granted His blessing upon our educational plan, and it is a delight to be able to say that you have hitherto given us entire cause for satisfaction. I thank you from my heart and trust in you for the future. I have still one counsel to give you and one request to make:—Life is serious and yet it is but a transition, a preparation for another, a higher life, which makes it imperative for us to use the time that has been granted to us. We are exposed to daily trials and temptations, and dare not relax in our prayers to God for strength to resist them, and to remain true to our principles. The visible things of life often lessen our interest in serious occupations, but we must remember that we have to learn each day, and that if we fail to improve we shall lose that which we have already acquired. A union of strength and tenderness is of all things the most desirable, and blessed is the man to whom God has vouchsafed this gift, which I dare to believe will be yours. My request is that you will never cease

to be my son, nor withdraw yourself from me in the least degree, because your position is somewhat changed, for you will always find in me a friend and a mother; and I beg further of you to remain the friend and brother of my son. Princes unfortunately rarely possess true friends, but his heart longs for their intercourse, and I feel sure it will be in your power to be useful to him. You have already promised me this, and I rely on your gratitude and honour. Farewell, my dear Rudolf, make use of these three very different books,* and always think as you read them of your second mother,

AUGUSTA,

Princess of Prussia, née Saxe-Weimar."

. . . . . .

When the Prince and Princess of Prussia left Berlin to take up their residence in Coblentz, their son was in his nineteenth year, and their daughter just twelve. Shouts of joy from the Rhinelanders greeted the party as they stepped on shore, March 17th 1850, when the picturesque student costume of the young Prince served to enhance his strikingly good looks.

"The true and complete moral conquest of

* The letter was in a parcel containing three books which she was sending as a gift.

the Rhine Provinces," says the historian Alfred von Reumont, "was first accomplished during the reign of Frederick William IV. The way had been paved by government and legislation on all sides, but the presence of the heir to the throne and his consort, completed it, and their example shows how much may be done by considerateness, recognition of established privileges, knowledge of people and their circumstances, and genuine interest in places and their concerns."

Not the least important share in this "moral conquest" was that taken by the Princess Augusta, who in the early days of her marriage, had been too much engrossed with the details of her own life to realise the claims of others. We know that she had not made herself acceptable in Berlin, where neither Court nor people loved her, and though she was certainly appreciated by a small number of artists and learned men, they were probably influenced by the assistance she was able to render them.

The loud-voiced ostentation of the Berliners, and the tediousness and want of intellectuality in the town, had repelled her almost from the very first; but the riots had taught her the danger of ignoring the favour of the people, and "the

necessity of mixing with the masses, sharing in their feelings, and getting in touch with their peculiarities."*

She was conscious that she was unpopular, and in her youth was far too proud to court appreciation that was not willingly accorded to her; she neither flattered nor dissembled.

But in spite of her reserve, she longed for affection, and behind a cold exterior, there lay concealed a thirst for the good-will of the masses, which increased in intensity as years rolled by, and her life became more and more joyless.

In my first chapter, I alluded to the fact that this thirst had never been quenched in the capital where the Empress Augusta somewhat impersonated the rôle of an unfortunate lover who pines for a smile, a friendly glance, but who never strikes the right chord, now exerting himself too much, now relaxing in his efforts.

The people of the Rhine are very different from the Prussians, and have more in common with the French, their neighbours to the west, with whom they are far more in touch. They are bright and courteous, less polished perhaps than the French, but on the other hand, more straightforward.

*Disraeli.

When Augusta came to Coblentz, she had lost all trust, and had changed from a confiding joyous girl, into a reserved cautious woman, sceptical on every occasion; but in spite of habitual weariness and discouragement, she allowed herself to thaw under these new conditions.

The Berliners had treated her with cold criticism, the Rhinelanders were frank and warm-hearted, and because of their kind welcome, the banks of the border river became the home of her heart, a visit to which was always a treat, as time passed on.

Augusta's beauty suffered terribly from ill-health, and by the time she became Queen, there were but few traces to recall it, but during her early residence on the Rhine, she was a lovely Princess, gracious and dignified, as well as intellectual. Her manner was stately, perhaps rather cold, but not repellent, and when she wished to captivate, she had a bewitching smile that shed sunshine over every feature, while her intense sparkling eyes could beam with such a frank sympathising glance, that one's heart grew warm under their gaze.

But her goodness was even more captivating than her beauty, and her indefinite longing in

Berlin to be of use, found an outlet in Coblentz, where she contrived to work for the welfare of the people, without offending any one of the existing religious and society cliques, while many instances of personal kindness date from this sojourn on the Rhine.

One evening there was to be a reception at her house, and among the guests was a clever woman whom the Princess had chanced to meet. She rarely went into society, and certainly did not expect to be invited to Court, for her wardrobe was both meagre and out of date; but she appeared in a simple silk gown, which was too short, and a cap far too large and very old-fashioned. Looks of scorn were fixed upon her costume, and the poorly dressed lady was soon left neglected and alone, until Augusta went up to her, and remained for some time in conversation, after which her guest had no further need to sit still in a lonely corner.

A sanatorium had been founded in the fifties outside Coblentz, by a physician, Dr. Petri, and a "coffee-concert" was held in the grounds every Friday afternoon, which the Princess was in the habit of attending. She had been absent for some weeks, when about noon one Friday it was reported that she had returned.

"Then she will certainly come to our concert," said the doctor with delight.

It was a lovely summer day, and the whole garden was sweet with the perfume of flowers; carriages were driving up to the entrance, bringing visitors from adjacent Ems, officers and ladies came in from Coblentz, and riders and pedestrians of all classes. Then at length the Princess arrived in an open carriage, accompanied by a lady in waiting, and two gentlemen, to be welcomed with tremendous cheers, while the servants of the establishment shouted "hurrah," and waved handkerchiefs or napkins, and one waiter was heard to exclaim: "It's a grand day for us!" knowing well that generous tips would be forthcoming for all.

The concert began, and among the andience was a very stout elderly lady, whom we will call Mrs. Müller, for want of a better name. All she wore was in bad taste, and made conspicuous by masses of jewellery. A daughter of about fourteen was by her side, just as bedizened and pretentious as the mother, who with her insupportable child was the terror of both patients and attendants. In strong contrast with these two, was the pretty refined-looking young governess, whom they both treated with marked

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discourtesy, and whose discomfort, which she bore with the greatest patience, it would be difficult to describe.

During the concert Mrs. Müller had seated herself in all her gorgeous breadth as near as possible to the Princess, with her daughter by her side, while the pale governess had retired to the background, though even from here she was kept in perpetual motion by signs and words, to pick up Mrs. Müller's embroidery thread which she had let fall, to re-arrange her shawl, to settle the pose of her daughter's hat on her curls, and such like trifles.

The Princess grasped every detail, was full of sympathy for the unhappy scapegoat, and signed to Dr. Petri to come to her, when she inquired about the trio, and learnt that the governess was an orphan who had taken the post with this vulgar woman in order to be able to pay for her own visit to a sanatorium. The doctor added that she was of good family and bore a most excellent character herself, though she was exposed to insulting rudeness in the house of her employers.

Indignant at such heartless conduct, Augusta arranged at once that board, baths, and all that might be needful for the girl should be provided

at the expense of the Princess, and for as long a time as Dr. Petri should consider desirable.

Her Royal Highness returned to Coblentz, and the physician communicated the gist of their conversation to the disconcerted lady, who had certainly succeeded in attracting the attention of the Princess, although in a perfectly different manner to what she had intended, and a few days subsequently she left the sanatorium, an abashed and humbled woman.

The young governess recovered her health during a long peaceful stay, and Augusta never ceased to take a kind interest in her welfare.

Whenever the officers gave a club ball, the commanding general and his wife were invariably present, accompanied by their son when he was at home. The young Prince enjoyed dancing with the pretty girls of the garrison town, and it is said that the Princess of Prussia was at one time somewhat uneasy least her Fritz should lose his heart to one of his partners. Their home life was of the simplest, Prince William had never cared for luxury, and Augusta set an example of economy in dress that earned her grateful thanks, as did also her denunciations against love of display and extravagance.

The Castle they occupied opposite the fortress

of Ehrenbreitstein, is now one of the loveliest spots on the Rhine, though at that time nothing but weeds and wretched bushes were to be seen on the ramparts, and not a flower grew in the neglected soil. While Prince William was absent on his inspection tours, the famous Rhine gardens were planted under the directions of his wife, and art joined hand in hand with nature to create one of the most charming promenades in Germany, which Augusta embellished year by year at her own expense.

In the summer she used to invite the orphans to this garden, with their adopted parents, the managers of the Asylum, and others connected with the children, when she herself poured out tea and coffee for her guests, and encouraged the tinies in a kind motherly way to help themselves to the dainty cakes and white bread with which the tables were laden. Great too was the delight to see her at the Christmas treats which she organised in the charitable institutions of the town. "The best of all would have been wanting," says an eye-witness, "if the Princess had not come. But how did she come one year? In a condition in which nearly any body else would have been in bed, drinking camomile tea, for she was suffering from sore throat, and was so hoarse

that she could scarcely speak; and yet, well wrapped up in a woollen shawl, in simply disgusting weather, she drove from one institution to another, because she was expected."

No wonder that Augusta became popular on the Rhine during those days, and that the people greeted her with jubilant shouts when she visited them year by year.

Her residence in the town on the Rhine and the Moselle was like a holiday, when the Coblentzers loved to congregate in front of the terrace of the Swiss house where she was accustomed to take her coffee when the military band was playing. She was friendly in her intercourse with the people, between whom and herself a union developed in the course of years, in marked contrast with her ceremonious behaviour in other towns, but which lost nothing in dignity because it was the only place in which she sanctioned an absence of etiquette. Everyone who knew her hastened to seek the interview of which they were already sure, and to tell her of their sorrows and experiences while she had been away; it was impossible for her to help them all, but her sympathy was unfailing, and although she had undoubtedly many heavy sorrows to bear, even in her dear Coblentz, the loving feelings of

the inhabitants was so true and comforting, that the bodily suffering against which she was struggling seemed to be less acute on the Rhine than elsewhere. A newspaper in the town, published in the eighties, gave a sketch of her daily life there.

"The Empress is better again, and her former lively interest in the people of the Rhine is as keen in this present visit as it always has been, but all is quiet at the Castle, and the benefactress of our poor is only seen when she is taking her daily drive in the carriage and pair with india-rubber tyres to the wheels. From ten o'clock in the morning, her Majesty listens to the innumerable petitions which are read aloud to her by her private secretary, von Knesebeck, which have poured in from all over the Empire, and sometimes provoke a puzzled smile, with the question how it can be possible to help them all, for the requests are often most extraordinary. One begs for assistance in some troublesome love-affair, another for a line of conduct towards 'bad' parents, soldiers ask for furlough that they may visit their sweethearts, and berths and posts, *ad lib.*, are entreated for Dick, Tom or Harry.

"On week-days the Empress invites but few guests to the Castle, though two younger or

older officers are always commanded to dine with her, preferably those that can recount their travels in foreign lands. After dinner, an hour is usually passed with reading aloud, and the Empress enjoys the French "Figaro" among other papers, the events of the day are then discussed, and the lady in waiting, Countess Hacke, retails the local news. Later in the afternoon, the Empress takes a drive to the hospitals, schools, park, gardens or mineral springs at Ehrenbreitstein; she is interested in all that goes on, and ready to help whenever it is feasible."

CHAPTER VII

FAMILY FESTIVITIES—SICKNESS AND SORROW—REGENCY AND CORONATION

THOUGH the actual life at Coblentz was calm and peaceful, family cares and anxieties were of constant recurrence during the whole of their stay. It has been said that the mind of Frederick William IV. who had always been capricious and changeable, was becoming more and more clouded, owing to his increasing intemperance, and that he allowed himself to be more and more influenced against his brother, who was certainly entitled to respect and consideration as the heir to the throne.

After their return from London, where the Prince and Princess had been present at the opening of the Great Exhibition in 1851, they witnessed the unveiling of the statue of Frederick the Great in Berlin, when William commanded the Guards at a grand review. They also visited the capital on the occasion of their silver wedding,

June 11th, 1854, when the festivities began with a family dinner party at the Castle of Babelsberg, and a soirée given by the King and Queen at Sans Souci, followed the next day by an entertainment for the people at Kroll's, in the Thiergarten, which was also attended by the Prince and Princess.

The time preceeding these ceremonies had been marked by many days of gloom. In the summer of 1853 Prince William was so seriously ill with inflammation of the lungs that for weeks his life was despaired of, and immediately after his arrival at Ems to recruit, he and his wife were startled and grieved to learn the death of the Grand Duke of Weimar.

It was in the early days of her residence on the Rhine that Augusta had discovered the first trace of the complaint which was to rest like a shadow over her life and be the cause of countless dreary hours. In 1850 she first went to Baden-Baden, in the hope of gaining some alleviation to her sufferings, and though the treatment was powerless to cure, she felt so much better, that she tried to return each spring and autumn, till it at last became a regular engagement that she should spend her birthday, September 30th, in Baden-Baden, and these

repeated visits served to form a closer bond between the family of the Prince of Prussia and that of the house of Baden.

The Grand Duke Frederick had ascended the throne when twenty-six to find himself in a difficult position, for, politically speaking, he was in the Austrian camp, yet lukewarm as his feelings towards Prussia may have been, he had sufficient prudence to keep the way clear for a union with that country.

A personal acquaintance made it easy for him to seek an alliance with the Prussian royal family, and he therefore asked the hand of the Princess Louise immediately after her confirmation. The 30th September, 1855, presented three causes for rejoicing, as the betrothal of Louise with the Grand Duke and that of Prince Frederick with the Princess Victoria of England were announced on the birthday of their mother.

Princess Louise was not strictly beautiful, but undoubtedly good and amiable, and the Grand Duke, as we know, gained even more honour through his marriage than he had ever anticipated. The wedding took place in Berlin, September 20th, 1856, when the ceremony was identical with that followed at the marriage of Prince William and the Princess Augusta. Again it was Elisabeth

that fastened the crown on the head of the bride, but *then* she was young and happy as the Crown Princess, *now* she was the consort of a sick, half-witted King, and foresaw that the days were numbered in which she could still grasp the reins of power. The King's malady developed into an incurable affection of the brain, and at the age of 60, in October, 1857, in full possession of every manly faculty, the Prince of Prussia was appointed deputy for his Majesty, when he and the Princess found themselves compelled to leave Coblentz. The office was at first to be held for only three months, as the majority of the King's counsellors were still anxious to withold him from real power, but at the expiration of this first period, as the condition of the King had not improved, it became necessary to prolong the arrangement. William was created Prince Regent, October 9th, 1858, and took the constitutional oaths on the 20th of the same month.

The wedding of their son with the Princess Victoria took place in the first year of the return of Prince William and his consort to the capital, and on February 6th, 1858, the young couple arrived at Potsdam, where the Prince Regent welcomed his son and daughter-in-law at the prettily decorated station. The public entry into

Berlin took place two days subsequently when the capital received them with brilliant fêtes and demonstrations. The Pariser Platz shone in all the glory of flowers, gay clothing, glittering arms and waving banners, while the decorations of windows, columns and balconies surpassed anything that the city had ever seen before. As the gala coach drew near, and the Princess could be seen through the large glass panels, the thunder of the cannon and the jubilant shouts of the crowd became more and more deafening. Immediately before their entry, they alighted at the Castle of Bellevue to visit Frederick William and Queen Elisabeth, but the interview with the insane King so painfully affected Princess Victoria that she had difficulty in controlling herself during the further procession.

January 27th, 1859, was another day of rejoicing for the royal family, when the present Emperor of Germany, William II. was born, but the glad shouts of the people penetrated without meaning into the silent sick-room of the King, who however lingered on until January 2nd, 1861.

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While awaiting the death of the King which had long seemed imminent, the question had arisen whether, on account of his advancing years, it

would not be advisable for the Prince of Prussia to resign the throne in favour of his son, nobody daring to hope that under the guidance of an old man, the fond dream of the nation for the unity of Germany could possibly be realised. But although the new ruler did not begin to reign till close upon the time when most are nearing their rest after "the work of the day is done," he evinced such firmness and determination that it was certain a new era was about to begin.

Since the coronation of Frederick I., in 1701, no ecclesiastical ceremony had ushered in a fresh reign, but William I. commanded that this later epoch in the history of the Hohenzollerns should be grounded on a religious service and the Kingdom be confirmed by the grace of God. The first acts of his reign were a wide-reaching amnesty and the dismissal of his brother's counsellors. Then followed the re-organisation of the army which met with violent opposition and filled the year with disputes between the crown and the representatives of the people, which simply increased in intensity after Bismarck had become Minister. The King was not in favour, and was even threatened with assassination in Baden-Baden, July 14th, 1861, as he was walking with Count Flemming, when a young man came

up to him, asking for charity. While the King was getting at his purse, the would-be assassin fired two shots, the first of which missed, but the second inflicted a slight wound on the left side of the neck, without disturbing the equanimity of the sovereign, though it greatly agitated his wife who was with him in Baden-Baden.

I have already alluded to the malady of the Queen which was sapping the brightness from her life, but which was powerless to influence the strength of her will. Her health was broken when her husband had been appointed his brother's representative, and nobody could have believed at that time that she would occupy the throne for thirty years, and even survive the Emperor. She eventually triumphed over all her opponents, Elisabeth, the Queen Dowager, had voluntarily left the country, and her other enemies had disappeared from Court, but it was a terrible strain upon her strength and courage to bear up under the weight of suffering, and hours of agony forced her to retire ever more and more from the world.

Time after time she submitted to the most painful operations, which brought her on each occasion to the very verge of the grave, and those who loved her wept with sorrow when they

learned after her decease how many were the scars and seams left by the knife of the surgeon. It is easy to understand that promotion to the dignity of Queen was now powerless to grant her any satisfaction, although there was a time when she had certainly hoped to enjoy its privileges.

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Augusta had lost her mother before she became Queen, for Maria Paulowna had died in 1859, but in spite of the hardening exhausting life of a court to which she became accustomed, the recollections of her childhood had remained as clear and fresh as ever, and although there was neither father nor mother to welcome her, she left for Weimar in April, 1861, and Louise Seidler, her former drawing mistress, thus speaks of the visit:

"The Queen arrived at two o'clock in the morning and left us in the afternoon of the second day. She was looking ill and was unable to attend either the morning reception of the Grand Duke or the evening banquet. Her friends had hoped to catch a glimpse of her at the gala representation in the theatre, but the state of her health debarred her from this pleasure also, though, almost to their astonish-

ment, she cordially received Louise Seidler and several former members of her mother's household, who were too overcome to speak, when they saw how pale and ill she looked, and could only tearfully kiss her hands. The Queen threw her arms round the neck of her old teacher and sobbed—she had just come from the grave of her mother.

October 13th of the same year the King and Queen left for Königsberg, where the coronation was to take place, accompanied by the royal Princes and Princesses, the Grand Duke and Duchess of Weimar, several Princes from friendly Courts and a numerous retinue, together with imposing Embassies, the members of both Chambers and a multitude of guests from far and near. Every place through which the royal party travelled was decorated, while deputations and district magnates waited for their approach. The Crown Prince received his parents at the gate of the old coronation town; the King was on horseback, and the Queen, wearing a white bonnet and ermine mantle, drove in a gala couch with eight horses.

The following day the royal family partook of the Holy Communion, and on October 16th and 17th they received the generals and foreign

ambassadors. On the morning of the coronation day, the king presented his consort with the highest grade of the order of the Black Eagle, and at the same time appointed her honorary Colonel of the fourth regiment of Grenadier Guards.

The anniversary of the battle of Leipsic and that of the birth of their son had been fixed for the solemn ceremony, when the town was decorated with flags, garlands of oak leaves and black eagles; the ensigns of the different provinces floated in the castle grounds and on three sides of the quadrangle, seats had been erected for the various trade deputations. On the fourth rose a platform along which the King and Queen passed on their way to the cathedral. The procession began with two heralds followed by a band, then came a regiment of the guards and members of the royal household, the commanding generals, the ministers, the heralds of the order of the Black Eagle, finally Prince Radziwill bearing the King's crown. The whole was really in three divisions, first that of the King and his suite, then that of the Queen, followed by the Crown Prince with all his attendants.

The Queen's procession was headed with pages, gentlemen-in-waiting and the Cavalry

General von der Goeben, bearing the crown of her Majesty, who followed in a white robe, the train of which was borne by five countesses. Then came the Crown Princess and the other Princesses, with twelve pages to close the procession.

Their Majesties were received by the clergy who preceded them into the sacred building, when the regal insignia, the great seal, the sceptre, the orb and the sword were laid upon the altar, while the magnificent voices of the cathedral choir burst forth and re-echoed through the dome, as they sang: "God save the King."

William I., after having changed the distinctive cloak of the order of the Black Eagle for his coronation mantle, placed the crown on his head himself, and waved the sceptre three times in the direction of the crowd.

Then the Queen came down from the higher level of the throne to the altar, wearing a mantle of royal purple, and the King placed the crown upon her head. But as she stood there on the very threshold of power and grandeur, she was conscious of no triumph, not even of satisfaction, for the day of her coronation was one strenuous effort to control her bodily sufferings, and it was only by a supreme exertion of her will that she was able to keep on her feet in the Cathedral;

and when the ceremony was over and the royal pair, still wearing their coronation robes, turned to retrace their steps to the platform of the Castle, she could scarcely hold herself upright under the crushing weight of crown and mantle.

But that tortured body bore the soul of a hero, and "only those," says Goethe, "who utterly deny themselves are worthy to rule, or can do so." And as the crown was placed upon her head, she bowed her whole being, as she at the same time took upon herself the thorny duty of self-sacrifice.

CHAPTER VIII

TRADITIONS OF THE RACE—AUGUSTA'S ACTIVITY DURING THE WAR—"THE RED CROSS"—PATRIOTIC UNION OF GERMAN WOMEN—THE YEAR 1870

In the midst of the vanity and selfishness which but too often characterise the life of Courts, we are attracted to one noble woman, who not only felt sympathy with sufferers, but denied herself in order to alleviate their necessity, and when such a benefactress is the descendant of a generation of women who were no mere puppets on the throne, but whose mother and grandmother thought and worked for the poorer members of society, our respect and esteem become all the more sincere. And to such a race of strong warm-hearted women belonged Augusta, Queen of Prussia.

Her mother was the fifth child of the Emperor Paul I. of Russia and his second wife, Maria Feodorowna. All the children were gifted, but she especially resembled her mother, both in character and outward grace. On his accession to the throne, the Emperor Paul had constituted

his consort the patroness of all schools for poor children, and all beneficent associations for people in reduced circumstances in St. Petersburg and Moscow, while she herself subsequently founded hospitals, almshouses, orphan, deaf and dumb and idiot asylums, training and technical schools, etc., etc.

Imbued with goodness, highly cultured and deeply interested in every phase of intellectual life, the Empress was never weary in planning for the welfare of her subjects, and when she died it was found that the different benevolent works which she had directed were so numerous that her son was compelled to arrange for a special bureau for the carrying on of business which she herself had superintended. She early trained her children to works of love and interest in her own charitable enterprises ; and they could certainly find no better example than that of this energetic, large-hearted woman.

We know that Maria Paulowna, did not fail to tread in her mother's steps after her marriage, family traditions spurred her on to a life of good works, for which she met with every encouragement on her frequent visits to St. Petersburg, and as I have already hinted, after the havoc of war had subsided, she set on foot a plan which is

bearing fruit at the present time. She called upon women who had already devoted themselves to the care of the wounded during the war, to carry on some good work in time of peace, and her appeal met with a hearty response in every town and village where her beloved name was a guarantee of success.

The "Patriotic Union of Women Workers," of which she herself took the direction and arranged the rules, soon stretched like a chain throughout the length and breadth of her little state.

In this manner a work originated in Weimar was continued under a different name and carried out on a far larger scale by her daughter. This little institution was the proto-type of the far larger "Patriotic Women's Union under the Red Cross," which half a century later was founded by the Empress.

There was no distinction of rank or creed in the members of either society, who in time of peace devoted themselves to the care of the poor, the education of youth and other philanthropical objects.

But a great, if not the greatest part of the work of the Grand Duchess was outside the limits of the Union. She provided workhouses, reformatories, spinning-rooms for poor old women,

and a Savings' Bank, which she not only managed, but for which she held herself responsible.

Germany wrote on her death: "It was not only within the narrow limits of her immediate actvity that the Grand Duchess Maria Paulowna elevated and encouraged her sex. Every spot, every cottage and even every aspect of life in the whole land bore traces of the strongest influence during the fifty-five years that she passed in her second home, which gradually permeated every class of women in the land. Her cultivated mind, her broad and liberal views, and her upright conduct, all influenced by the glow of her warm-heartedness, kept her firm and equable under all changes and chances, and enabled her to strengthen others by the force of her own constancy. The blank caused by her removal will first fully reveal to us the magnitude of her good works."

It remains to be seen whether at the end of a hundred years there will survive any trace of the beneficent acts of this mother and grandmother. Much which bore the impress of their authority and efforts, and which their own loving hands furthered will probably languish and be forgotten, but the excellent example which encouraged the

daughter and grand-daughter to take up their work, can never cease to bear fruit.

"The important position which the Empress Augusta acquired in the history of practical philanthropy," says Professor Virchow, "excites admiration far beyond the frontiers of Germany; indeed, I venture to assert in every civilised land. She occupied herself unceasingly until her death in founding hospitals and asylums, while she pointed out to us the best means of alleviating sickness and suffering. She has also deserved our warmest thanks for bringing before our notice the use of remedies which international societies and especially that of the Red Cross have proved to be efficacious. The history of nursing points to the memory of countless famous women who have been bright examples in their own times and to future generations, but no instance is known of a woman who so perseveringly offered of her best in the cause of a work which embraces all mankind, both in peace and war.

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Before she became Queen, Augusta had turned her enquiring mind to many subjects, art, literature and music had all been dear to her, and had procured her many hours of enjoyment, but they had never entirely absorbed her thoughts.

She had never stood very near to her own family, and now, afflicted as she was with a grievous complaint, which science, even at the present day seems powerless to cure, it was a trouble to her to feel they were still more distant. Her warm-hearted nature, which craved for affection, could not exist entirely without sympathy and appreciation, and as she did not find them in those nearest to her, she sought them elsewhere. It was in Coblentz that her interests had first been awakened in necessitous cases, about which she made more than a hasty enquiry, but her zeal had not then been keen enough to point to work as the best substitute for happiness.

The higher position of Queen brought with it new and sterner duties, when the poor sickly woman found herself besieged with suppliants and begging letters. It was not so much that she acquired more self-forgetfulness day by day, as that her strength seemed to grow with her responsibility, and having discovered her true vocation, she was entering on the best phase of her life.

There were some people who maintained that the beneficence of Augusta had its origin in a restless longing for activity; others attributed her good deeds to selfish, petty motives which

had their root in vanity and a desire for popularity. That can be said of all the good and great things that are accomplished in the world, but it is nevertheless certain that when the war broke out, the care of the sick was the one concern of her heart. In the hospitals where she encountered misery so bare that compassion was speechless, it stabbed her to the heart to feel herself helpless in the presence of such helpless need, for the gruesome consequences of the war which met her gaze were a thousand times worse than she had anticipated. At the reviews she had attended in time of peace, she had seen the soldiers march past, bright and cheerful, in their serried ranks with banners waving and the band playing—here they were stretched on straw, bleeding and unrecognisable, some undergoing amputation of a leg or arm, while groaning in agony. She felt herself moved in her inmost soul, and must again and again have been tempted to turn away from the pictures which were unrolled before her eyes, to shrink from witnessing further horrors. But she did not spare her nerves one painful impression and was sometimes even cruel towards herself. An officer was lying in awful agony, and his noseless bleeding face was almost more repulsive than one can

fancy. Both doctors and nurses entreated her not to approach his bed, but she insisted on sitting by the sick man, and speaking a few words of comfort which for one moment made him forget his pain. Then, without realising the hideousness of his appearance, he suddenly sat up, seized the hand of the Queen and kissed it. She sat still for a second, then left him with cheerful words, but no sooner was she outside than she fainted, as she murmured:

"My God, my God, how awful!"

Thirty years ago, the care of wounded soldiers was far removed from the present organised system; it was then usual, in accordance with established custom, to fire on an ambulance, to capture army surgeons and their nursing staff, and to ransack the hospitals of the enemy. It was barbarous, but admitted, and it was not until after the Italian war of 1859, that the question of the neutrality of the wounded was first ventilated in an address delivered by the Neapolitan, Dr. Palasciano, which gave rise to the Geneva Convention. The thought became enlarged and worked out in many directions, notably by the Swiss author Henri Dunant, who in his book, "Recollections of Solferino," depicted in burning words the horrors which he himself

had witnessed on the battle-fields of Italy. He maintained that in order to introduce a better condition of things in future wars, it was not only necessary that the military sanitary system should benefit by neutrality, but that "relief societies should be formed in time of war by means of qualified volunteers."

His words aroused attention, and an International Conference was held at Geneva, October 26th, 1863, to discuss the proposition of Dr. Palasciano and Henri Dunant, after which a committee was formed to deliberate on the means of developing them in a practical manner. Later on the International Society termed "The Red Cross Society," again assembled, when the meeting at Geneva was attended by official delegates from Austria, Spain, France, England, Holland, Prussia, six minor German States, Switzerland and Sweden, while addresses expressing approbation were received from Belgium, Denmark, Italy and Portugal.

Under the presidency of the respected Swiss General Dufour, these representatives of the rulers of fourteen states were unanimous, and the Geneva Convention was signed, August 22nd, 1864, in consequence of which the sick and wounded and all belonging to a military

nursing staff are recognised as neutral in time of war.

"The Red Cross" became the badge of the Society and the international code was henceforth acknowledged by every European State. Such a merciful decision could not fail to awaken the keenest interest in Augusta of Prussia, who was the first to make her kingdom really energetic in carrying out the ideas suggested by the Geneva Convention. During her many sleepless nights on a bed of sickness, the concerns of "The Red Cross" became her chief subject of thought, and her practical experience of life helped to render her in the course of years an authority on every detail connected with the institution.

Before the war of 1864, Prussia had few societies occupied with the care of the sick and these were in no way in touch with each other, but on the outbreak of war their respective committees consulted together and then agreed upon co-operative work of which the Queen took the direction, and at the end of the fifth campaign, she became convinced that it was incumbent upon her to introduce the newly developed hospital system.

A war has seldom been less popular than that between the ruling Powers of Germany, and the

King of Prussia was overwhelmed with petitions to bring about peace at any price. Friendship with Austria belonged to the traditions of his house, and it was most unwillingly that he had consented to fight, but at the same time, having done so, he was prepared to carry it on to the end.

Augusta was sorely tried, for her son-in-law was fighting in the ranks of the enemy, and she could only fall on her knees before the King to entreat him to alter his plans.

"It is too late now," he said, as he raised her, "war is declared," and with his glance fixed on the statue of Frederick the Great, he added:

"In spite of every opposition, I shall place myself at the head of my army, where I would rather die than yield in a question of such vital importance."

When the war actually began, the Queen was in Coblentz, but she returned as quickly as possible to Berlin. Committees were appointed in all the towns of Germany to collect contributions towards the voluntary nursing of the wounded, and to form under the guidance of the Queen the above-mentioned union of German women, who were to work as members of The Red Cross Society.

During the Campaign of 1866, twelve million marks were paid into the Central Committee,

who were thus able to support a body of 200 paid workers, while 250 voluntary helpers were exclusively occupied in sorting and expediting the contributions in kind which flowed in for the use of the Union.

The very first war had proved how much there was to be done by willing hearts and busy hands, and this constituted the turning point in the life of the Queen, who had begun by self-denial when first visiting the hospitals, but had now realised the satisfactory nature of her activity. She improved the existing hospitals and toiled with unremitting energy to procure help for the wounded, as well as to alleviate the sorrows of bereaved relatives. The eagerness with which she set about her task, with which she expended thought and means, banished indifference in all, and aroused the dormant energies of those who were immediately about her. It needed no patent of nobility or exalted rank in the State to entitle a woman to approach her, simple philanthropy was the passport to her palace.

A fearful outbreak of cholera added to the horrors of war, and immediately after the commencement of hostilities the royal family was thrown into mourning by the death of Sigismund, the third son of the Crown Prince, who was in

camp at Neisse, whither the Queen hastened in order to comfort her son. She visited the different military hospitals of several towns and became at home among the wounded of Berlin, with the result that her strenuous exertions encouraged others to still greater efforts, as they became inspired with confidence in their own powers and acquired the courage which had been lacking. She was at home in every department and rendered invaluable aid when arranging for the erection of temporary hospitals and victualling centres. She encouraged all classes in their work, and not the least of her services was the power of winning helpers to her cause. Princesses and the wives of ministers and generals worked side by side with actresses from the minor theatres, though among the crowd might be found some who were vulgar and pretentious, whose highest amibtion was to breath the air of a court and to come in close contact with royalty. But even these were received with friendly condescension, for Augusta could put up with anything, if only her benevolent intentions were approved and carried out. She wanted people with whom she could consult about her plans, and really preferred ladies of the middle class whose practical common sense often furnished her with useful hints. The meet-

ings of the Society which had frequently degenerated into mere talk, developed into a serious exchange of opinions under the guidance of the Queen resulting in deeds and not only in "pale and colourless words." She became imbued with the nobleness of a life of work, but fully aware that goodwill and philanthropy alone cannot qualify a woman for the responsible post of a nurse, and that knowledge as well as zeal is required, she exerted herself to enlist the daughters of the upper classes as students in the cause which she had so warmly espoused. She therefore added a school for nurses to the Augusta hospital which she had opened in Berlin, where girls of all classes could be instructed, though she decided that only those of noble birth should become nurses in her hospital, "because," as she said, "we have many institutions for daughters of the nobility, though not one which lends itself to a life of usefulness." Here they found work, independence, with free board and lodging, and many a girl who had passed from childhood into a round of court balls and hollow society routine learnt from their Queen that "durable happiness can never be founded upon excited nerves, but upon the solid bases of self-sacrifice." *

* Werner von Heidenstein.

As we have seen there were numerous societies of women inaugurated during the war under the guidance of the Queen, when new hospitals were started, provided with nurses, funds and appliances; systematic collections organised and carefully administered towards the support of the families of wounded soldiers, and the widows and children of those who had perished.

A perfect mine of energy and useful gifts had been placed at the disposal of the Queen, while the war was in progress, and when peace was proclaimed, she was anxious that such activity should not again be dispersed. On the occasion of the public rejoicings which were held November 11th, 1866, the newspapers published an appeal, signed by both men and women of the highest standing, inviting those who had already given their services to continue their exertions and to enlist fresh members, women of unimpeachable character, whether married or single, to take a share in the work. On the conclusion of peace, this Union of Women Workers undertook not only to maintain and administer the means they had acquired, but to place themselves in readiness to render assistance in case of an epidemic, famine or inundation, and in this way the work soon outgrew the limits of its first intention. They began

to understand that each district should examine into local cases of need, and work in aid of the sick, widows, fatherless or neglected children, as well as the training of young girls; and this alteration in the orignal statutes of the society was ratified in 1869, when the first period of the Union, that of organisation, may be said to have been completed, before a renewal of activity in the war of 1870.

The Queen was at Coblentz when the Franco-Prussian war was declared, but July 21st, a few days before the departure of the King for the seat of war, she returned to the Capital and accompanied her husband to the railway station. She had grasped the awful sacrifice of human life entailed by war, and while the excited crowd was shouting, snatches of patriotic songs were sounding in her ears, and handkerchiefs were waving round her, she could not restrain her tears.

The Queen Dowager Elisabeth, returned to Berlin to be ready to take a share in the care of the wounded and Princess Victoria too was prepared to help, but Augusta was the life and centre of the work, and it soon became apparent how much she and her staff had learnt during the previous war, so that when hostilities broke out with France, the different German corps of

volunteer nurses for the wounded were found to be far better organised and equipped than before.

I mentioned in my first chapter that her exclamation from the first was: "Help must be sent to the Rhine!" and I related how the people assembled in joy under her windows, and how she encouraged her nurses by her own zeal and enthusiasm. Finally I told that when she left the hospitals, she bore away with her the very best gift that can be made to a sovereign, the touching thanks of her own subjects, as well as those of her homeless enemies. It would encroach far too much on time and space to tell in detail of the unweariedness and courage of Augusta and her staff, who spared themselves neither exertion nor sacrifice to try and minimise the cruel consequences of war. The following statistics will convey some idea of the energy and activity she brought into play:—

A few days after the declaration of war, 2000 committees were at work under the guidance of the head office in Berlin, with 60 million marks at their disposal; 677 private hospitals had been set on foot under the Queen's supervision, 4431 men and 1703 women had left for the seat of war as voluntary nurses of the wounded; while at home, 13,429 persons were occupied in the same

way. The money that flowed into the Union of Women Workers under the Red Cross amounted to nearly 40 million marks, while gifts in kind were valued as little less than 15 millions. In the autumn months of 1870 alone, the Union received four million articles of clothing and 500 tons of food for distribution.

"In the moment of bidding farewell to my troops whom I am leaving in France," William I. wrote to his consort at the close of the war, "I feel impelled to express to your Majesty how deeply and thankfully it has affected me to witness the care that has been bestowed upon the army through your initiative and guidance, in consequence of which we have been helped from every corner of the kingdom and during every stage of our campaign. The society for assisting sick and wounded soldiers has accomplished the unity of Germany in the domain of humanity, which the political harmony of our Fatherland has also tended to promote.

"When hostilities commenced, the Union formed itself into one compact body, in which every German State was represented and encouraged, even by the auxiliary branches of America. I recognise with gratitude that this co-operation of German energy, this universal

self-sacrifice has accomplished far more than seemed possible, and has appreciably contributed to maintain the briskness and spirit of our army during the hardships of war, while the thankful recollection of these benefits can never be effaced from the minds of soldiers or civilians. I cannot express my own thanks and recognition better than by asking your Majesty to make them known in my name to the members of your central committee."

CHAPTER IX

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE KING AND QUEEN—THE CROWN PRINCE AND THE CROWN PRINCESS—AUGUSTA IN DAILY LIFE—HER LITTLE TEA-PARTIES.

THE relations between William and Augusta, had undergone no change since their coronation. She had loved her husband in their young days, and now in spite of disappointment, she continued to admire him, and to do all that lay in her power to ensure his comfort and well-being. But no good-will is strong enough to cement irreconcilable differences, and she who had such an intense longing for loving intercourse, had to experience ever more and more acutely, that she was nothing to the King. She could not grasp his enthusiasm for military glory, nor his satisfaction in commanding his troops. It is true that hospitals and nurses that lay so near to her own heart, afforded a common interest, but although the old warrior-king was sensible of her exertions in this department, he considered her zeal exaggerated, and used to exclaim half

derisively : "The Empress would like to provide a four-poster for each one of our wounded soldiers."

There had been but little family life in the home of the Prince and Princess, but when they became King and Queen the last semblance of a joint existence had disappeared ; they even occupied different storeys of the Castle, and had a separate Court which constituted their society. Family harmony cannot truthfully be said to have been at home among the Hohenzollerns, but it is difficult to conceive a greater contrast than that between father and son ; the latter did not understand the King, who mistrusted his son and disapproved of nearly everything that he undertook ; and popular as "our Fritz" was among the middle classes of the capital, the Emperor never overcame his own poor opinion of him.

Early in the seventies, the artist Anton von Werner was appointed to perpetuate the Imperial proclamation, and he first of all made a sketch to submit to the Emperor in which well known persons were grouped in the same order as during the ceremony in Versailles, William I. standing on a raised platform with Bismarck to his left on a lower step, and on his right the Crown Prince,

whom the artist had represented with one foot resting on the upper level. The Emperor examined the sketch, and noted the position of the Crown Prince, then with a frown, he took his pencil and made a thick rapid stroke through his son's right leg, while he laconically observed: "Not yet."

"A farmer's son," says Gustav Freitag in his book "Der Kronprinz und die deutsche Kaiserkrone," "who with his family inhabits a wing in his father's house and possesses not a single shilling beyond his allowance, whose children are kept by their grandfather who employs them to look after the plantations on the estate,—such a man, who had to put up with this dependent position for fifty years, would be looked upon as especially unfortunate. And yet according to the laws of the house and old traditions the case of the German Crown Prince is a similar one. The complete dependence on the sovereign which is hereditary in Prussia, exercises in small and great concerns an influence on the son's relations with his father and on family life in general; and however good men may be, a want of freedom on the side of the dependent which becomes more and more irksome as he advances in years."

"All parties," continues Freitag, "were influenced by the magnificent power of the busy old man, who postponed every claim, whether legitimate or not, to the future, while he who stood next to him in honour and in the esteem of the nation, was pushed on one side and compelled to pass the time in which the consolidation of the Empire which he longed to see was being effected, in idle waiting and expectation. He felt the emptiness of his position which induced a certain weariness and dejection that grew upon him. If he had been endowed with energy of character, in spite of hindrances, he might have pushed his way and taken his share in such State affairs as were less congenial to the tastes of his father. He was not wanting in the industry and fidelity to duty that characterise the Hohenzollerns in fulfilment of appointed tasks, but he was deficient in their enjoyment of fresh creations and undertakings."

The considerate, amiable goodness of the Prince has never been questioned, only his strength of character. He had certainly not inherited his father's love of uniform, and when travelling he was always seen in plain clothes. He had been forced to enter the army against his will, and the night before the battle of Wörth,

he said to Gustav Freitag: "I have never cared for military glory, and without one envious feeling I would willingly transfer any credit to another. But it is my lot to be led from war to war, from one battlefield to another, and to wade through blood before I ascend the throne of my ancestors."

He preferred peaceful occupations, and especially the study of the fine arts, and though he himself was never more than an amateur, he was an encouraging patron. He attended meetings of scientific men as well as artists, and in general liked to shew himself friendly towards those upon whom his father turned his back.

It is an acknowledged fact that the marriage of the Crown Prince and the Crown Princess was a happy one, and that the wife became the *confidante* of her husband from the beginning. He looked upon men and events from her point of view, and was satisfied that their home life and the bringing up of the children should be in accordance with her wishes.

Whatever may be said respecting the Crown Princess—and opinions differ even at the present day in Germany—her self-sacrificing, noble conduct during the illness of her husband must be admitted by all.

Mercilessly persecuted as she was by many of the newspapers and without sympathy from the people of Berlin, she bore her martyrdom of sorrow with dignity and self-control, while watching to fulfil the slightest wish of the Emperor Frederick.

Her sympathies were too English for the Germans, and it happened one evening when Bismarck allowed himself to comment upon her admiration for the institutions of her native land, that she angrily exclaimed :

"Remember, Prince Bismarck, that I am an English Princess."

"Your Royal Highness is mistaken," replied the Chancellor, bowing, "you are no longer an English Princess, but the German Crown Princess."

It is easy to understand that the Crown Princess and her mother-in-law could never have many points in common, for Augusta's stiff manner rather repelled than attracted the simple Englishwoman who was averse to an excess of etiquette.

The Grand Duchess of Weimar had brought up her daughters to observe great ceremony, and Augusta could not conceive Court life without it. But, while there was not a tinge of unreality in

Maria Paulowna, her warmth of heart infused life into the forms which she considered necessary, the want of affection under which her daughter suffered gradually induced and increased coolness in her manner, which never left her in the presence of her Court and domestics. And this commanding superiority was equally conspicuous at her receptions, when she moved encased as it were in the stiffness of etiquette, and in spite of her devotion in the cause of benevolence, it is difficult to think of her as genial.

Impetuosity had been the great fault of her youth and suffering did not really calm her, though she acquired greater self-control, and the coolness she shewed before the world was but a mask worn under difficult circumstances, when outward repose became the result of inward conflict. But what she had at first only assumed eventually became the disguise behind which she hid her repeated disappointments and intense longing for affection, and which she never removed to give full play to her real feelings.

As time went on she withdrew more and more into the privacy of her own rooms which were situated on the second floor, and formed as it were the frame to her lonely existence ; they were few in number and hardly to be called elegant,

though they bore the impress of the superior, intellectual woman who inhabited them.

A broad marble staircase leads from the hall of the castle to an ante-room, through an open door of which is seen the conservatory filled with palms and flowering plants, and on the opposite side folding doors used to admit into the Queen's drawing room, the walls of which were covered with oil paintings by celebrated artists. Her sitting room and study were adjoining this apartment, and it was in the former of these that the Emperor visited his wife, when they sometimes partook of a meal together seated at a small inlaid table. On the tables and shelves of the study were to be seen different reminiscences of her life, and by the window was a large white marble angel. On the writing table, before which she spent the greater part of each day, were likenesses in several styles of the members of the family, and a carved clock of the Black Forest, a present from the Grand Duchess of Baden. Close to the study, the window of which looked on to the Opern Platz, were her library and bedroom, but the large bed in this latter was never used ; a little one that could be altered and adapted being substituted, in order to give more comfort to the suffering Empress.

Then leading out of this and looking on to the garden was her dressing room, round which were shelves, singularly decorated with Easter eggs, some of which were costly specimens from the Royal China Works that had been sent or presented to her in the course of years. Immediately outside the door of the dressing-room was an iron staircase which led to the private library of William I., where he was accustomed to breakfast, and Augusta joined him whenever her health would allow of it.

Her life was marked by the most rigid punctuality, and it is mainly attributable to her pitiless strict adherence to rules of diet, that her poor sickly body was able for so long a time to resist the ravages of her malady. She began the day with a cup of strong tea or coffee, followed at 11 o'clock by strengthening meat soup ; for dinner she liked nothing better than game and spinach, with a glass of old Malaga and water ; then before going to bed, about 10 o'clock, she had cake with a cup of tea, or an ice, and this plain regimen was strictly followed from the time she was sixty-five until her death.

. . . . . .

Perhaps it was just because ill-health and circumstances forced the Empress to a life of

retirement, that she felt the craving to see people about her, and when she had been weighed down by the loneliness of a long day, or suffering had precluded all possibility of occupation, she would cause herself to be let down from her own apartment to the first floor by means of a machine designed for the purpose.

Here she took her place in the tea-room, a long apartment adjoining the suite set apart for the Grand Duchess of Baden, where she met a select circle three or four times a week. They were nearly always the same people who knew each other so intimately, that with the best will in the world, they could not relate the least little bit of news, and although scandal and gossip were plants that flourished here as elsewhere, neither the tea nor the mixed biscuits of the Empress could prevent these evenings from being insufferably dull.

Unable as she was to rise from her reclining chair, she yet exerted herself as hostess in her formal manner to keep up the conversation, but her phrases were so stereotyped, that in spite of their real esteem for the Empress, they could not respond to her efforts, and the ladies yawned behind their fans, while the gentlemen nodded in their chairs. It was a little more lively when the

Emperor appeared, he had always a pleasant word, but then his stay was all too short.

Among the standard guests who, night after night, from one year's end to another, were to be met with in the tea-room belonged the First Lady of Honour, Countess Perponcher-Sedlnitzky, who succeeded Countess Schulenburg in the seventies. With her pleasant genial face, her obliging demeanour and her black wig, she was just in her element by the side of her mistress. The world in general was indifferent to her, but she was a good friend all the same, always courteous and able to swallow the most bitter pills with a bewitching smile. The Countess Maximiliane Oriola, Bertina von Armin's daughter, had been at Court from her girlhood, but in consequence of the favour said to have been shown her by William I., she was never more than tolerated by Augusta, who however showed that politeness has nothing to do with feelings, while it need not presuppose a forgetfulness of natural dislike, for she never failed in outward courtesy towards her rival. The Countess was moreover good-natured and fairly well liked, but she would probably have been a greater favourite, if she could have forgotten the fact that she had once been a beauty.

Far more important, as well as more judicious in her behaviour was the hump-backed Countess Adelaide Hacke* who was nearly as intriguing as she was ugly. She had a bland smile for all, but her false eyes betrayed her want of truth, and when once your back was turned, she had your character ready prepared at her fingers' ends, and as she took a keen delight in inventing, she was not always satisfied with any evil reports that might be circulated about her acquaintances, but raked up scandalous stories touching their parents and grand-parents which she retailed as opportunity served.

If Augusta had a *confidante*, though it was alleged at Court that she was reserved with everyone, it may have been her first lady of the bed-chamber, Fräulein Marianne von Neindorf who had entered her service before the Revolution of 1848, had watched Prince Frederick and Princess Louise from their childhood, and sacrificed her own health while attending on her mistress. Perhaps this was the reason why the Empress was more open and unreserved with her than with hardly anybody else, and took her into

* In addition to those already mentioned, the Empress had three other ladies in attendance. The Countesses Nesselrode, Schwerin and Viztum.

her confidence. This lady was feared at Court, as it was well known that she could exert her influence if she chose, and ladies of high birth used to sit waiting, sometimes for hours, in order to speak to Marianne, who, in full consciousness of her power, enjoyed keeping them at her pleasure.

The stronger sex was represented at these tea-parties by the Private Secretary, Baron Bodo von dem Knesebeck, Augusta's right hand in her benevolent deeds, though he despised mankind generally, on account of the appalling duplicity that he met with. Then there was Count Nesselrode who was as easy as the other was sharp, and well disposed towards his fellow beings in the same proportion that Knesebeck was averse to them. Finally, Count Wilhelm Redern whom we have already named * and his brother Counts von der Golz, Wilehelm Pourtalès and a few others.

Occasional coming and going from without was the only element of brightness that visited this circle and among the persons who appeared at intervals, the Duke and Duchess of Sagan attracted some little attention. They were at home in Sagan, Paris and Berlin, where they

* See Chapter IV.

inhabited a handsome house, Unter den Linden. The Duke was on excellent terms with all the foreign ambassadors and was much esteemed by the old Emperor, who not unfrequently invited himself to his house, when the host was in the habit of speaking so softly to his Majesty, and sitting so very close to him, as to give the appearance of a continual whispering of secrets into his ear.

Louis Napoleon von Sagan had married in 1861 the Countess Pauline, daughter of Count Castellane, Marshal of France, and if the husband spoke the cautious language of diplomacy, his wife was imprudent and loud-tongued enough for them both. She startled her surroundings with her smart quips and sarcasms, and was distinctly a far more impulsive, insolent, yet loveable being than one would have thought it possible to meet in such an exclusive circle, when it was impossible to feel a moment's *ennui* in her presence.

As Count Paul Vatili expresses himself:

"She was capable of putting life even into a statue by telling it of its faults!"

Augusta, to whom any break in this habitual monotony was welcome, looked upon the Duchess as a breath of fresh air that inspired new life into

her party, she was constant in her invitations to both husband and wife when they were in Berlin, and as the Duchess in spite of loudness, possessed the very kindest of hearts, the Empress and she remained on the best of terms to the end, which was perhaps partly attributable to the French descent of the Duchess, while her gushing temperament suited Augusta in its variety. She had been attracted by the French nation, their language and habits from her youth, and preferred both French readers and lacqueys. She kept her journal in the language and read French books by preference. It is said that Victor Emmanuel once jestingly asked Napoleon III. if the Prussian royal family did not speak just as good French as he himself, when the Emperor replied:

"King William speaks very well; as for the Queen, it is impossible to say that she speaks well or badly, she converses like a Frenchwoman who unites accurate knowledge with singular appreciation of the euphony and subtlety of the language."

Whenever it was possible, the Empress took the side of the French, and at the time of the bombardment of Paris, she earnestly begged William I. to desist. Her interference sorely irritated Bismarck, who on this occasion is said to have remarked:

"Petticoats only conduce to the ruin of state-craft."

The members of the French embassy were always received with favour by Augusta who, moreover, liked to hold out a helping hand to any foreigner who wished to make his home in Berlin, and it is reported that she observed one evening to a member of the French legation:

"Can you guess what has constantly been the dearest dream of my life? To be a good little *bourgeoise* of the Chaussée d' Antin with means enough to see a French comedy every evening."*

With the exception of the Emperor and the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Baden who were of course present when they visited Berlin, very few of the family were to be seen at these parties, with the exception of the Princess of Hohenzollern.

*This was well known and credited in Paris, so that it is no wonder that after her death, the French papers published warm eulogies on the wife of their conqueror, whom they considered as having been more favourable to their country than any other Princess of Europe. In the notices of her death which teemed with praise and commendation, they referred to her magnificent benevolence and her true Christian spirit. After a lengthy introduction: "Le Temps" says: "No Frenchman can think of the Empress Augusta without the most respectful sympathy, he has only to recall the interest which she took in the French wounded who were taken to Germany in 1870. Both as Queen and Empress, she cared for her subjects like a mother during the wars which followed each other almost without interruption after 1864. But a still

The Roman Catholic branch of the house of Hohenzollern, which abdicated in December, 1849, in favour of the King of Prussia, has always been on the best of terms with its Protestant relations, in spite of virtual separation for 400 years, but on the recognition of the Emperor of Germany as the head of the family, all the members of the Roman Catholic house were granted the title of "princes of the blood."

Prince Charles Anthony, who was in partnership with the railway king, Dr. Stronsberg, died several years ago, leaving three sons, Leopold, Charles and Frederick, and it was the eldest of these, who by his nomination as candidate for the throne of Spain, gave rise to the Franco-Prussian war. He was an officer in the Prussian army, although his tastes were much more those of a man of science than a soldier. The second,

higher feeling animated the soul of this heroic woman for whom there existed neither conquered nor conqueror, when they stood face to face with death." Another French paper rightfully calls her one of the most enlightened princesses of her time and praises "l'esprit non seulement évangélique mais humain de la souveraine," A third paper has: "L'Impératrice était mièux qu'une femme à l'esprit élevé, c'était un cœur d'or," and continues: "Je ne fais pas une phrase en disant qu'elle s'est de tout temps prodiguée pour soulager la souffrance et la misere." In conjunction with these remarks it may be noticed that one of the Empress's last acts of benevolence was to found an institution in Paris for the protection of young girls, to which in the beginning of 1890, a few days before her death, she remitted a considerable sum.

Carol, is King of Roumania, and it is related that when the throne was offered to him, he went to Bismarck to learn his opinion on the subject:

"It is pretty good promotion for a Prussian lieutenant," the statesman said, "try how it answers, young man."

Prince Frederick, the youngest of the brothers, spent the best part of his youth in Berlin, hardly noticed before his marriage in 1879, with the charming Princess of Thurn and Taxis, niece to the late Empress of Austria, after which Augusta received him and his wife into her inner circle. People had become so accustomed to look upon Prince Frederick as a private gentleman, a person of no importance, that the aristocracy shrugged their shoulders when Augusta gave the Princess a lady in waiting, and required that she should be treated as a member of the royal house.

It was possibly because she was as good and modest as she was beautiful that several of the ladies thought fit to hate her, and did not scruple to make it generally felt that they considered the little Princess of Thurn and Taxis as of no use whatever.

But another member of the Roman Catholic house of Hohenzollern was always welcome on her rare visits to Berlin and that was Elizabeth, Queen of Roumania.

King Carol had left Germany in 1866, but frequently came to Berlin when he never failed to appear in his former uniform of a Prussian dragoon. He was a great favourite with the Crown Prince and with the present Emperor, from both of whom he was always sure of a genuine hearty welcome, which was extended in the same spontaneous manner to his wife by the lady members of the family. Augusta was very fond of the poetess with her pale refined face, large blue eyes and long ringlets falling over her shoulders, and when Carmen Sylva entered the tea-room, a ray of sunlight seemed to illumine her thin, exhausted looking features, while her thoughtful eyes shone with warmth and geniality. Both had suffered and developed under discipline which had made an author of Elizabeth of Roumania, and stamped the Empress of Germany as an apostle in the cause of philanthropy; both were imaginative and sentimental, and therefore at home with each other from the very first.

Before we take leave of the Empress's tea-room, we must not omit to cast a glance upon one, who although outside the inner circle, was too frequently present to allow us to pass her by without a word.

We have seen that Augusta was fond of music and enjoyed an evening at the opera, whenever her health would allow of it, and with her accustomed kindness and sympathy, if the performance had especially pleased her, she used to send for the singer and personally express her thanks for the gratification. Of course he was flattered by the honour thus shown to him, but when he had made his three bows, or the prima donna, curtseying to the ground, had disappeared by the door leading from the Imperial box into a tiny with-drawing room, they contemplated the Empress with the same indifference as before. A few words from William spoken in his jovial way were a dear recollection for life, but a long speech by Augusta was dutifully put on one side like a leaf from a withered laurel crown, simply because all she said was so affected, that the heartiness that really accompanied her words, was imperceptible. And yet the artistes were perfectly well aware that William I. had very little appreciation of their performance, while his wife's words were an intelligent recognition of their efforts. There were several that gained her admiration in the course of years, and many who did not maintain the interest they had awakened; but there was one whom she honoured with her

friendship, and this was the opera singer Désirée Artôt. The very evening that the young girl made her *début* in Berlin, Augusta felt irresistibly attracted by her refined, well modulated style, and though Désirée soon left the capital, her patroness did not lose sight of her. Whenever a new star appeared, she used to say: "She sings well, but not like Désirée Artôt," and she never rested until her favourite was recalled to the Capital.

The Emperor William enjoyed the society of the prima donna and never feared to have a joke with her or to provoke repartee which amused him; but if anybody had attempted such a thing with his wife—which would however have been impossible, her favour would undoubtedly have been lost, for she felt offended by the tiniest breach of etiquette.

In the whole life and behaviour of Désirée Artôt de Padilla's life, there was not a trace of the eccentricity, irregularity or extravagance of conduct which is so often conspicuous in great artistes; she was as much at home on the smoothly polished floors of the Court as on the sloping boards of the stage, and no unguarded moment could ever surprise her into forgetfulness of the strictest observance of etiquette.

As I mentioned in a previous chapter, Pauline Lucca was the Emperor's favourite to whom he was accustomed to send costly gifts, and when Augusta heard of one of these, she used to send to Madame Artôt a bracelet far more beautiful, or a necklace worth a larger sum. Madame Lucca was commanded to sing at the Court concerts * by desire of the Emperor, Madame Artôt was not only requested to sing officially, but admitted to the tea-receptions at the castle and to visit the Empress in her daily solitude, when her gentle undertones soothed the unstrung nerves of the sufferer, who could listen hour after hour to her singing. With the deep steadfastness which was one of the best traits in her character, Augusta was faithful in this friendship until her death, and long after Madame Artôt had ceased to appear in public, she frequently sang in the Imperial salons.

Augusta did not notice that the artiste had become old and did not hear that the voice she had loved in her youth had lost its ring and freshness. When Désirée with unmistakeable skill sang Händel's "Verdi prati" or Schumann's

* During Lent the Empress used to arrange for a Concert at the Castle every Thursday, to which visitors were invited in regular rotation.

"Frühlingsnacht," the ageing Empress would exclaim with almost youthful fervour: "Not one of the young ones can sing like Désirée."

CHAPTER X

HIGH LIFE—PRINCES AND PRINCESSES—BISMARCK AND HIS WIFE—MOLTKE—BAZAARS AND SUBSCRIPTION BALLS

THE proclamation of the King as Emperor of Germany had taken place January 18th, 1871, in the Salle des Miroirs at Versailles, and in consequence of the power and consideration that had accrued to Prussia on the brilliant close of the war, the Court of Berlin had from that date become grander and more important. Strangers flocked to the Capital which seemed to have become the central point of the Continent, and on the Emperor's birthday, gatherings were held of the representatives of all the minor German Monarchies. On his 90th and last birthday, there was a congratulatory assembly such as the world has rarely seen on one occasion, when eighty princes and princesses, envoys from the Pope, the Sultan, and the Emperors of China and Japan met together. The aged monarch had attained the goal for which he had striven, and a

United Empire had been founded by his unwearied efforts.

In Weimar they sang :—

> "Karl August, Deinen Traumen ward Gewährung,
> Und deinen deutschen Streben ward sein Lohn ;
> Zu deines Nahmens rühmlichster Verklärung
> Teilt Deine Enkelin den Kaiserthron."

for this now historical event had raised Augusta from Queen of Prussia to the dignity of Empress of Germany, and Weimar's daughter, with her formal ceremonious manners was eminently suited to her position.

The same strong self-control that enabled her to bear bodily pain, made it a rare thing for her to shrink from the fatiguing duties of presentations, and in spite of suffering, she was to be seen at most Court ceremonies, magnificently dressed ; but with her cheeks rouged and her eyebrows painted, thankful for the resources of art to hide her sickly features. When she did not feel equal to make the round of the salon, she was wheeled through a side door, received those who were presented to her seated in her chair, and then disappeared as noiselessly as she had come.

I can recall the scene as if it were yesterday, though it was towards the close of 1879 when

the King and Queen of Denmark were visiting Berlin for the first time since the war, and there had been a state banquet, followed by a performance of "Lucia di Lammermoor" at the Imperial Opera with Adelina Patti as prima donna. The house was filled from pit to gallery with a brilliant assembly of uniforms, stars and ribbons of different orders, interspersed with the costly gowns and jewels of the ladies.

The Empress entered the middle part of the Imperial box with the King of Denmark on her right and Queen Louise on her left hand; at the same moment the side boxes became filled by the Emperor and Prince William next to the stage, and by the consort of Prince Frederick Charles and some other Princesses to the right.

I can never forget Augusta as she stood for one moment in front of her box and gazed upon the scene with her dark blue eyes, wearing a long white fur cloak, while diamonds flashed from her throat and hair. Then with a truly royal movement of the hand, she motioned to the Queen of Denmark to seat herself first.

Louise hesitated, but the Empress repeated the invitation and waited for the Queen before taking her own seat. The style, the serious distinguished features, the dignified repose of

her whole being could not fail to command universal respect and homage.

Several unusual guests were to be seen at the Imperial Court after the war of 1870-71, amongst them the Viceroy of Egypt, the Shah of Persia, and princes from both China and Japan.

The attraction of novelty would have secured them the best possible reception, if it had not been discovered that several of these eastern monarchs possessed manners that were little in accordance with the usages of the Court; they ate with their fingers, treated their table-napkins as pocket handkerchiefs and wiped their mouths on the sleeves of their sumptuous robes.

When these Asiatic and African magnates announced a second visit, the idea was not quite so welcome as on the first occasion, and William and Augusta relinquished the burden of entertaining them to the younger members of their family.

Among the princes and princesses at this time assembled round the ageing Imperial couple, the eye rests with the deepest interest on the person of the present Emperor who, more ambitious and adventurous than his father, early shewed his repugnance to authority, and from a child opposed his own will to that of his parents. In

defiance of the traditions of the house of Hohenzollern, the Crown Prince and the Crown Princess tried to bring him up to the life of a civilian, rather than to that of a soldier and employed many means to gain their point, but unavailingly ; military affairs possessed an absorbing attraction for the boy who saw himself in thought the leader of the war party and insisted upon treading in the footsteps of his ancestors.

A twist dating from his birth rendered one arm incurably weak, which consequently militated against his training for the army, but his energy overcame all difficulties, and he became an expert swimmer, shot and rider. "Never," says his tutor, Dr. Hinzpeter, "has a young man in the Prussian army been less physically equipped to become a brilliant cavalry officer than Prince William. But when he had succeeded, when his grandfather saw him at the head of his regiment, and when his Uncle Frederick Charles, who was looked upon as an authority on all cavalry matters, said to him: 'You have done well, I did not believe it possible,' he had won his position by dint of sheer hard work and pluck."

The present travelled Emperor, with his hasty impulsive character, his flowery and frequent

speeches, gives rise to mixed opinions, which are however not openly expressed in Prussia. It may be that his faults are more conspicuous than they were then and that his early accession to power has elated him, but it is certain that he was a great favourite as Prince, and that his clever, dauntless character and his simple unpretentious manners won all hearts. His consort, Augusta Victoria, was born October 22nd, 1858 at the Castle of Sommerfeld. She is the eldest daughter of Duke Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein-Augustenburg, and her mother, *née* Princess of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, was a grand-daughter of the Duchess of Kent.*

Prince William paid a visit to her parents in 1879, and shortly afterwards rumours of a probable engagement became current.

After an interference on the part of Prussia, ostensibly to protect the interests of her father, the Duke, as is well known was allowed to "sit empty-handed" on the conclusion of the Schleswig

* "The late Duchess, (who died January, 25th, 1900), née Princess Adelaide of Hohenlohe-Langenburg was born July 20th, 1835, and was the younger sister of the present governor of Alsace-Lorraine, She was a grand-daughter of Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg by her first marriage with the Prince of Leiningen. Princess Victoria married secondly the Duke of Kent, and became the mother of Queen Victoria, so the deceased Duchess Frederick was step-niece to the Queen of England."—*Standard.*

war. Bismarck was now of opinion that some reparation might be made to him, which would at the same time attach Schleswig still more closely to the Empire, and the expressed opinion of the Prussian nation that the match was a poor one only increased the ardour of the Chancellor to bring it about, and the wedding actually took place February 27th, 1881. In accordance with the prescribed rule, the bride had to make her entry into the capital from Bellevue.

I was walking at the time down Unter den Linden with some friends when we came into the midst of the crowd that was thronging the foot-paths in serried ranks and kept back as behind an invisible wall by police on foot and on horse-back. Sooner than we expected, a signal was given that *the* moment had arrived, when the bridegroom rode up at the head of his regiment. The Empress Augusta and the Grand Duchess of Baden stepped on to the balcony of the Castle, and every face wore an expression of curiosity, but not of enthusiasm or delight, for the marriage was not a popular one.

Then came the gilt coach with the Crown Princess and the young bride, who wore a white and pink gown, and a diadem on her fair hair. She bowed right and left, while the people stared

and a few shrill cheers were to be heard. I remember that we all agreed in thinking her very insignificant, and a general opinion prevailed that love had been the least factor in bringing about the union. But although they did not think very highly of her, she rose in the estimation of the people when she became a mother, and courtiers and poets wrote sonnets in honour of the Imperial family; groups were printed and photographed of the four generations, great-grandfather, grandfather, father, and the tiny child, which found their way into the remotest corners of the Empire.

The young couple lived at Potsdam, and might be seen most days in the town, or walking in the adjacent wood; sometimes the Princess drove with little Prince William by her side, who from his earliest childhood was taught to bow courteously to the passers by.

The Princess was amiable, not exacting, she neither opposed her husband nor interfered with his concerns, and the placid life of the little town was exactly suited to her tastes. When her husband was absent she invited the wives of the townspeople to a cup of coffee, when they all sewed for some benevolent object. She modestly made her own purchases in the shops and often bought a big packet of sweets, which

she distributed among the street children, who occasionally clamoured for more, when she went back to fetch another packet. In the course of years she has developed other qualities, while her life as Empress has naturally led to many changes. She is charming and winning towards the masses, and *the* one of the Princesses of to-day whose manners recall those of Eugénie of France.

As a woman, she has trained herself upon the model that German men prefer; she is submissive to her husband, never seeks to exercise the smallest influence over him, and while William II., in his ardent zeal is busy with various burning questions, to-day pointing out new paths to the labouring classes, to-morrow opening an Exhibition with great ceremony, a third day delivering an exhaustive speech on school regulations, and starting the same night for some distant land to study its people and customs—his wife seems to believe that the best help-meet is the one of whom the least can be said.

The Emperor's only brother, Henry, born August 14th, 1862, is little known at Court, but as a naval officer he has visited many lands, and knows no greater pleasure than to stand on the bridge in a storm; he is animated by one

fixed idea, to gain colonies for Germany, and to create for her a large and powerful navy.

We remember that the sister of the aged Empress had also married into the Prussian Court, but as she was almost as much of an invalid as Augusta, they had but little comfort in each other's society.* William I. could hardly bring himself to pass a pretty face without a pause, but his brother, the husband of the Princess Marie, carried his weakness for the fair sex to a far greater extent, and consequently there was but little domestic happiness in their home.

Frederick Charles, General of a cavalry regiment, who spent most of his time at his hunting lodge, Dreilinden, was their son, and his wife, Maria Anna, was by far the most beautiful Princess of Germany and undoubtedly the most amiable, though, united as she was to a brutal husband, she was certainly the most unhappy of them all. It is reported that he was in the habit of beating both the domestics and the Princess, and that in his drunken fits he used to force himself upon her and amuse himself by dragging her through the rooms by her hair, and in the light of his general way of living it is not altogether

* Princess Marie died in 1877, and Prince Charles in 1883.

improbable that the report is correct. He finally exhausted the patience of his wife, who fled from the Castle one night and claimed a divorce the following day.

William I., who hated nothing more than scandals among the members of his family, entreated her to put up with her position, and so to please the old man, who had always been good to her, she yielded, and remained with Prince Frederick Charles until his death released her in 1885.

Maria Anna suffers from deafness, which for many years has hindered her from filling the place at Court to which she is entitled by her close relationship to the sovereign, her intelligence and charming manners, but she still attracts attention, even as a grandmother, on state occasions, by her great beauty, which time has so wonderfully spared. In spite of her defective hearing she is extremely musical; and during the winter she may be seen most evenings in her corner seat of the Imperial box at the Opera.

In the time of William I., the family included among its members two amiable bachelors, Princes Alexander and George, who have since died. Prince Alexander spent his early life

in Switzerland, on account of delicate health, but took up his residence in Berlin in 1864, where his hospitable home was the meeting-place for celebrated men, both military and civilian, by whom he was equally appreciated.

Every Berliner knew his younger brother George, who was always to be seen in the uniform of the Pomeranian Uhlans, of whom he was the Honorary Colonel. His tastes were very simple, he only wore his gala uniform and orders on State occasions, and generally went on foot, when he liked to stand and contemplate the booksellers' windows, or take long solitary walks in the Thiergarten. When at home, he preferred the society of scientific men and authors, and was himself a writer of dramatic works which appeared under the pseudonym of Conrad.

Reviewers are apt to judge the efforts of princes with lenity, though it would be unfair to infer that it proceeds from a desire to flatter. It emanates from a natural and quite legitimate feeling, sympathy with those to whom tradition and bringing up assign other fields of work, and who yet brave prejudice and mistrust by taking to art, poetry or science.

Prince George had the advantage of deserving the praise bestowed upon him. One of his works

"Phædra," for which Wilhelm Taubert composed the music, is a fixture on the Imperial *répertoire* in Berlin where it is frequently given. His "Cleopatra," "Where happiness is found," and "Medea," are performed from time to time in other theatres. These, as well as his remaining works, are characterised by depth of feeling and harmonious choice of language. If it had been the lot of Prince George to work for his living, he would certainly have made his way, he had literary talent and was heart and soul a poet.

There were many members of the Imperial family who did not actually reside in the capital, but who visited it so frequently during the life of the old Emperor that they may be looked upon as belonging to the Court.

Among these Louise of Baden was the most welcome. She and her husband spent Christmas with her parents, and the Grand Duchess nearly always paid a longer visit to the capital about the time of the Emperor's birthday, March 22nd. She attended the general meeting of the Patriotic Women's Union, which was held under the presidency of the Empress, when mutual interests and love of work tended to draw mother and daughter closer together. The simple frank

manners of the Grand Duchess made her a great favourite with the people, and her popularity seemed to reach its highest point when she threw herself in front of the Emperor to cover him from the murderous attack of Hödel. Then when her father was wounded by Dr. Nobiling just a fortnight later, and she gave herself up to nursing him night and day, their devotion increased even yet more.

. . . . . .

The Premier and all-powerful Chancellor of the Empire was rarely to be seen in the Imperial salons, as the overwhelming amount of work that rested on his shoulders left but little time for the claims of society. He was represented at Court by his wife, who headed the ladies at all great receptions, as being the first in rank among the princesses not belonging to the Imperial family. Bismarck only appeared on very exceptional occasions, and then only when it suited him.

In 1875, the State purchased the old palace of the Radziwills and gave it to Bismarck for his use. Later on, when his daughter and sons had their own establishments, he and his wife with a small staff of servants became the sole occupants of the large house. The rooms were poor, except the grand hall which takes up half of the

ground floor and is famous as the scene of the meeting when "strict neutrality and non-interference in the Eastern question," was determined upon in 1878.

They led a regular, quiet life, and the Chancellor's time was divided between his ministerial duties and the pleasures of a happy home. By the advice of his physician, Professor Schweninger, he took to rising early and walking, before the business of the day began, in his garden which extends from the Wilhelmstrasse to the Königgrätzerstrasse, and contains trees so old that they have had to be supported with iron poles to prevent them falling down from their age. It was overlooked by one house in the Königgrätzerstrasse, from which the Prince could be watched during his walk, and windows were frequently hired by Germans or curious foreigners passing through the city, who armed themselves with field or opera glasses, and followed his every step. They even tried to attract his attention by cries and shouts, and then the Prince had strong canvas stretched from the top of the wall that he might escape their observation; but finally he preferred to restrict his walk to the so-called "Chancellor's path," a colonnade adjoining the palace.

Princess Bismarck had never any pretentions to beauty, but she was attractive when speaking, and her pretty eyes bore the expression of genuine goodness of heart. She dressed with taste on all public occasions, though not conspicuously, but in the street, at the theatre, or when travelling, she looked like the modest wife of a simple citizen. Although she was frequently seen in society, she disliked admitting strangers to her home in Berlin. She was gentle and forbearing towards everybody, but her husband's political path and the hatred and duplicity which she saw springing up around him, made her despise mankind almost as much as Bismarck himself.

Among the well known men that stood near to the Emperor William I., it is impossible to overlook one whose seriousness and modesty were almost exaggerated, and who seemed to deprecate every display of the high esteem in which he was held.

We know the outline of Field Marshal Moltke's life which began in Denmark and ended in Prussia, that he was a lieutenant in the Danish infantry, that he threw up his commission in disappointment at not getting more rapid promotion, that he entered the service of Prussia in

1822, and that he gained a world-wide renown in the wars against Austria and France.

Moltke was very rarely present at Court, though on every occasion of public rejoicing, the Emperor's birthday and weddings, the delicate, beardless face with thin determined lips and intelligent piercing blue eyes, well known from likenesses, if not from life, was generally to be seen.

. . . . . .

The Court is naturally the centre for all fashionable society, even though it may not afford the greatest amount of enjoyment, but more exclusive than the Court balls, where the *bourgeois* element mingles with that of the highest rank, were select balls in the time of the first Emperor which were attended by the nobility only. Court officials with their wives and members of the aristocracy were generally present at a first performance at the Imperial Opera, the grand concerts at the Conservatoire and charitable bazaars got up by the nobility, where the many circles of Berlin society met together; representatives of the Court, Jewish financiers, modest men of learning and poor musicians.

A bazaar for some good cause was usually one of the features of the season, when philanthropic

and pretty women of the best society acted as saleswomen and thereby enhanced the value of their goods.

The wives and daughters of the plutocracy strained every nerve to ascend in the social scale by holding out friendly, eager, well-filled hands to their aristocratic sisters, who graciously accepted their gifts and had all their irons in the fire for that very purpose, but who, on the close of the bazaar, deliberately turned their heads another way, in order not to see the polite bows of the *parevenues*.

Subscription balls took place every winter at the Imperial Opera when the middle classes had the chance of a near approach to their Emperor, but the demand for tickets in the time of William I, was so great that it was frequently only through respectful calls upon the opera singers that they could be obtained. The whole of the royal family was generally present at these balls, and in the patriarchal reign of Frederick William III., the Court *condescended* to appear. In the early days of Frederick William IV. these balls were brilliant Court functions destined to dazzle the commoners, who were more or less ignored, and herded together behind pillars, overcome with bashfulness and astonishment. The tables were turned in the

reign of William I. when with the Crown Princess by his side, preceded by the manager of the Royal Opera, and followed by the Crown Prince with the Princess Frederick Charles, they walked in solemn procession round the theatre, each pair stopping in front of the box occupied by the Empress Augusta, and bowing respectfully.

But no sooner was this ceremony over, than the members of the Court returned to their boxes and the rank and file took possession of the stage and the pit, and thus transformed them into a ball-room. In this way the aristocracy and the middle classes changed places, the former withdrew and became spectators, while the latter whirled past in the giddy mazes of the dance.

It was only exceptionally that the two sets came into closer contact, though a story is told of a tailor who found himself side by side with Prince Frederick Charles and remarked: "The company is very mixed this evening, Your Royal Highness."

The Prince, whose temper was none of the best, is said to have replied:

"Hang it! it isn't everybody that can be a tailor."

According to another version of the story, it was the Crown Prince to whom the tailor made

his observation, who good-naturedly, rejoined: "you are right, my good man, there are both ladies and gentlemen."

Pretty girls married and disappeared from this scene of their triumphs, young lieutenants became colonels or generals, dance-loving lawyers changed into privy councillors or members of parliament, then fresh couples waltzed in the enormous ball-room, when the previous guests had become stiff and old, but these subscription balls remain much the same, though times change, and each year shews a similar procession of princes and courtiers, as one ruler follows another upon the throne.

CHAPTER XI

THE EMPRESS AND ROMAN CATHOLICISM—THE EMPRESS AND BENEFICENCE—PERSONAL IMPRESSION—THE LAST MEETING

JUNE 16th, 1871, the troops made their entry into Berlin, headed by the Emperor on horseback, accompanied by the Crown Prince and Princes Frederick Charles, Bismarck, Moltke, and Roon, and followed by the Empress and Princesses in carriages, drawn by six horses. 42,000 soldiers decorated with garlands of oak leaves, formed the procession which defiled under triumphal arches, and halted on the square where was unveiled on this same day, the equestrian statue of Frederick William III.

The joy of victory had succeeded to the awful loss of human life, and the hardships of war. Milliards of francs were pouring into the land from France, and with giddy rapidity Berlin blossomed forth from a moderate capital into a city of a million inhabitants. The lust of building seized all classes and engaged both

small and great in wild speculation. A peasant in Schöneberg became a threefold millionaire, by the sale of a plot of land on which a suburb of villa residences was rapidly mapped out; journeymen masons drove in first class cabs rather than go on foot, and drank champagne instead of their accustomed pint of beer.

But one fine morning people woke from their illusion to find that the fever of speculation had ended in bankruptcy. Old commercial houses, apparently founded upon a rock, cracked and tottered, then collapsed. Taxes pressed heavily, trade and industry were approaching a standstill, and disputes at home followed hard upon victories abroad, which naturally tended to drive the milliards of France from the country as rapidly as they had come in.

The Jews had been the promoters of these wild speculations which now excited the anger of the people, and led to a regular persecution against them. Artisans and petty tradesmen were not the least of the sufferers, and the shock of failure simply threw them into the arms of the socialists.

In order to fill the cup to the brim, disturbances arose from a third quarter, when the Roman Catholic priesthood rebelled at having

to submit to a Protestant power, which resulted in religious conflicts—"Kultur Kampf."*

Different views have been held at different times concerning the position that the Empress Augusta is admitted to have taken in politics. It is quite credible that with her sharp intellect she longed more than once to express her opinion when State affairs of importance were agitating the world, but at the same time it is also true that Prince Bismarck resented any interference on her part.

Two statesmen have recognised in their memoirs, that her interference in political events was by no means unimportant. Beust calls her "a Sister of Mercy," and relates that it was her conciliatory influence that rendered the terms of peace more lenient for Austria and Saxony, after the war of 1866.

Bismarck, on the other hand, blames her encroachment on political affairs, and maintains that she repeatedly thwarted his plans, and endeavoured to lessen his influence with the Emperor. One thing is certain, that during

*Leo XIII. was raised to the Pontificate when the Kultur Kampf was raging, and the attention of the world was riveted on the deadly struggle between the Roman Catholic Church and Prince Bismarck—a struggle in which the great Chancellor found his equal, if not his master."—F. Marion Crawford.

these religious conflicts she strongly opposed the Chancellor both by word and deed.

In Coblentz, where she had spent comparatively happy days, she had been surrounded by Roman Catholics, to whom she felt she had a diplomatic mission, for their cool attitude, until the beginning of the sixties, towards the royal house of Prussia, had spurred her on to gain their greater confidence.

The Court preachers in Berlin, who suited the religious views of the Emperor, had never touched her heart, and the bare, uninteresting churches of the Lutherans were cold to her artistic temperament that longed for something visible, pictures and ceremonies. It was not in Protestant Prussia, but in the Roman Catholic district of the Rhine, that she had first experienced the pleasure of living for others, and while she was really suffering from disappointed hopes and selfish regrets, she had been brought into contact with the charity of the Roman Catholics, and had seen the calm serenity of their Sisters of Mercy in the midst of sorrow, and even in the presence of death.

Their tenets had all unawares crept into her heart and taken up their abode there. When in Coblentz, she was visited by Roman Catholic

priests, whose institutions she supported, while she expressed herself with asperity towards those who opposed the doctrines of their church.

As long as she was the wife of the sovereign there could be no question of openly avowing her views, and just as she had concealed her love for her husband, and entrenched herself behind dignity which had repelled the confidence of her children, she was now obliged to control her feelings towards the church which she loved. It was in secret that she had to listen to her favourite priests and enjoy the consolations of their faith; but even before her death, Ultramontane papers went so far as to affirm that the Dowager Empress had been received into the Roman Catholic church. While she was still on the throne, she was compelled to patience when the Roman Catholics, whose religious views she shared, and towards whom she felt herself invincibly attracted, after spending so much time in their midst, were persecuted by Bismarck, whose greatness she could hardly understand, and who himself certainly treated the Empress with scant consideration.

Many stories are current about her behaviour towards the Chancellor, and it is reported that while she plotted against him, he revenged himself

by uttering bitter sarcasms against her. He could never reconcile himself to her admiration for France, and her sympathy with the church which he opposed was for ever a rock against which every attempt at friendly intercourse was bound to suffer shipwreck. It is significant that Bismarck's organ ("Norddeutsche allgemeine Zeitung") during the "Kultur Kampf," stormed against "the petticoats that had made common cause with priestly skirts," and not less suggestive is the fact that a disreputable weekly paper in Berlin was allowed to hurl its poisonous shafts against the Empress with impunity.

"It is no longer a secret from me," Augusta wrote, in 1877, to Frau von Bonin, "that it is easy to read between the lines of those papers which touch upon these conflicts, that I am in sympathy with the Ultramontanists and that my surroundings are of the extreme type. At one time I was accused of being a freethinker, and that was ascribed to the fact that I kept up my intercourse with men like Humboldt and Böckh, as well as with faithful Roman Catholics. But is it not the duty of our State to tolerate all shades of religious opinions? By the respect which I shew to members of both communions, I simply exhibit that absence of prejudice which from my earliest

youth was impressed upon me as essential in all religious questions. It is to be hoped that these disputes will soon cease, and especially that we shall not lose sight of the common point of unity from which the two Confessions have diverged.

"What they are now trying to attain by the law, was the subject of scientific controversy about thirty years ago, from which no one who had the least interest in one of the two religions could exempt himself. We elders can watch the course of events more calmly as time goes on, and our main anxiety is that the union between them should not be sundered. The conviction that one divine thought rules in both churches which will survive all time, must not only be maintained, but strengthened. In spite of their great dissimilarity, Martha and Mary served the same Master without envy, and in the same way a collateral existence for the two churches is not only possible, but natural. Of what significance is a difference of confession if we turn our eyes to the goal 'that is set before us?' None! I have been brought up in these views, I cannot abandon them, and others would even blind me as to my real self. Who affects me the most, Bach or Palestrina? The music of each contains for me the same Divine harmony, and when I listen to their hymns

of praise, I rejoice at the thought that God reveals Himself in equal beauty to two totally different natures. Therefore, away with all that tends to disunion. . . ."

The Empress's care for Roman Catholics did not lead her to neglect the Protestants, but when it was reported in Prussia that she was allowing herself to be influenced by the Romish priests, she was almost hated. Her self-denial during the war was forgotten, while her attitude with reference to religious disputes and her opposition to Bismarck again aroused the distrust of the people. The chilling expression of countenance which she shewed to the world diminished in the eyes of many the value of the courage with which she undertook the struggle with social views.

We have seen that the care of the wounded during the war was mainly her work, and that she wished that all improvements and discoveries relating to the nursing of the sick should be known and adopted in as wide a circle as possible. It was gratifying to her to learn from those whose opinion was worth having, that she had been the means of opening out new paths in this direction, and she continued to work indefatigably that provision might be made against a day of misfortune, in peace or in war.

In August, 1871, she summoned for the first time a meeting of deputies from the Patriotic Women's Union, under the Red Cross, who were to meet at Würzburg, in order to consult about further work, how best to keep mutually in touch, to interchange their several experiences and to prepare for a combination of forces in case of emergency. The meeting was opened by a vote of thanks to the Empress, who replied:

"You have expressed gratitude to me, but I cannot accept it for myself alone, it is due to those who by their offerings and unwearied work have supported the cause which brings us together. It has been a great pleasure to co-operate with you and with the numerous sub-divisions who have joined our ranks and shared in our labours. High and low, irrespective of position or circumstances, have all been animated by one thought, that of our beloved Fatherland, in whose name I desire to express my heartfelt thanks to each one in particular, for it is only because every member has devoted her best powers to this great work that the body has accomplished a task that fills us with pride and joy. Let us continue as we have begun, carry on our work, serve the great cause which relies upon our help, and maintain the same endurance in peace as in time of war.

May the consciousness that we are dedicating our strength to the Fatherland be ever present to our minds, and then the best reward of all *must* be ours."

The Empress Augusta continued to act as President of the Patriotic Women's Union in the succeeding years of peace, when help was always forthcoming in times of exceptional need, such as bad harvests, famine, inundations or serious fires. In 1880—I mention it as an instance—famine threatened the province of Silesia, the Empress immediately "ordered out her troops," and within a week after the reception of the news the minister of the Interior was able to report:

"The first bowl of soup given to the starving was supplied by Your Majesty's Patriotic Union."

A few weeks later four hundred kitchens had been organised by Augusta's coadjutors, from which the really needy were supplied without payment. The whole organisation is quietly worked, one wheel fits into another and it is always ready to be first in the field of usefulness. Its principal is *bis dat, qui cito dat*, and the celerity with which assistance has been sent is the best proof of its excellent management.

The plans which Augusta organised for the systematic relief of misery, in addition to this

Union, were numerous and of themselves form a distinct chapter in her life. Among the institutions she assisted was the Berlin Fire Brigade, for whose disabled members she organised a benefit society, while each year such as had distinguished themselves were presented to her and received some commemorative gift at her hands.

Among the charities indebted to her care, we must not overlook the Magdalen Home in Berlin, and the Magdalen Asylum in one of the suburbs. She looked after the fatherless, destitude young girls, and started a home for minors who had fallen into evil ways. She gave prizes to faithful domestic servants, and founded, in conjunction with the Emperor, almshouses for aged men and women, and repeatedly offered rewards for any improvements in the care of the sick. In 1883 she undertook the superintendence of the Hygiene Exhibition in Berlin, and presented medals to writers of important papers.

There was hardly a branch of benevolence that did not command itself to her sympathy, and if once her interest was excited, she seldom relaxed in her efforts. She was hindered by no apparent difficulties, and even while the Anti-semitic agitation was at its height, in 1881, she visited the Jewish orphanages and infirmaries.

The same broad views that influenced her in religious controversies were apparent in the field of politics. She once heard of a family in deep distress, but it was added that the man was a socialist. "What do his political opinions matter to me?" rejoined the Empress, "I am thinking of his famishing wife and children," and she sent them a substantial gift.

"I am afraid," she wrote to Frau von Schöning, in 1863, "that this socialistic movement may lead to sad results. I cannot discuss it with the King my husband, who is more than busy with current matters, but the Crown Prince and I share the same views; he is studying the question with Schulze-Delitzsch and agrees with me that self-help would prove the best means of combating distress. The Chancellor apparently ignores Schulze and his efforts, but if this disinterested friend of the people is persecuted and spited, it will drive him to side with the atheistic democrat Lassalle, whose immoral life, though no secret, does not deter the masses from clinging to him. Lassalle's fanaticism stamps the movement as of importance, his adherents daily increase in number, and this unfortunate political split adds fuel to the flame. What can we do? Doomed as we are to wait, there is nothing but

active benevolence, which is the liberating element in these communist agitations. If we organise charitable works which have their root in religious strength, we are building a dam against the inundation of socialism.—'Let mankind be noble, helpful and good,' the words of my great master Goethe, is my sole reply to the erroneous teaching of Lassalle.—But we cannot foresee how long this confusion will last, we must do our duty, do all that can possibly interpret the greatness of true benevolence, and as quietly as possible, without any display of religious feeling. Plathow and Lette are my most active helpers, their advice prevents me from dissipating my forces and acting aimlessly. All the rules and regulations that bear my name are weighed by practical men, so that you may confidently use the help that I place at your disposition. Never apply to any in authority for counsel or assistance, what we have undertaken we must carry out by our own means. I close these lines with the comforting confession: The solution of the socialistic question lies in charity to our neighbours. If we wish to elevate our minds and strengthen our hearts, let us cling to I. Corinthians ch. xiii. where St. Paul's song of praise has become to me as a gospel. AUGUSTA."

Among the charitable institutions that she either founded or supported, the Empress had two which more especially appealed to her sympathy; the Augusta Hospital in Lützow-strasse, Berlin, and the Augusta Girls' Institute, in Charlottenburg.*

The Institute in Charlottenburg was founded in 1871 to educate the daughters of officers and army surgeons who had fallen in the war. The girls must have completed their twelfth year, and have to pass an examination before leaving. They are taught by masters and mistresses of the

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*A few months after the death of the Empress, the Reichsanzeiger" published a list of the institutions named in her will, which in concise terms not only recalls the charitable undertakings that interested her, but gives us an idea of her full laborious life. The list is as follows :

1. The Patriotic Women's Union. 2. The Central Committee for the German Associations under the Red Cross. 3. The Empress Augusta Hospital in Berlin. 4. The Sisters of Mercy in the Empress Augusta Hospital. 5. The Magdalen Home in Berlin. 6. The Sanitary Society in Berlin. 7. The Institution for deserving poor in Berlin. 8. The Augusta Fire Brigade Society. 9. People's Kitchens in Berlin. 10. The Evangelical Society of St. John in Berlin. 11. The Roman Catholic Hedwig's Infirmary in Berlin. 12. Almshouses for Members of the Jewish Community in Berlin. 13. Asylum for neglected children of good character. 14. The Langenbeck House in Berlin. 15. The Coblentz Institute for charitable objects. 16. The Rhine gardens in Coblentz. 17. The Sisters of Mercy belonging to the order of St. Borromeo in Ehrenbreitstein. 18. The Maternity Charity of the Sisters of St. Clement in Münster. 19. The Deaconess Maternity Charity in Kaiserswerth. 20. The Weimar Institute for charitable objects.

highest standard, and were formerly under the motherly supervision of the Empress herself. She provided lectures and concerts for them at which she tried to be present, allowed them to see good plays at the Imperial Theatre, invited them to a Christmas Tree at the Castle, and in the Easter holidays set them to look for eggs in her winter garden.

When Augusta was in Berlin she paid a weekly visit to Charlottenburg, where she had her own room in which she received the Lady Superintendent and heard her report. Each fresh pupil

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21. The Patriotic Women's Union in Weimar. 22. The House of Mercy for the Sick in Königsberg. 23. The Samaritan Society in Kiel. 24. The Bethany Infirmary in Breslau. 25. The Women's Union of St. Andrew and St. Ursula in Cologne. 26. The Baden Institute for charitable objects. 27. Women's Union in Baden. 28. The Empress Augusta's Home for young girls in Charlottenburg. 29. The International Union under the Red Cross in Geneva.

In addition to large sums given to each of these institutions, she bequeathed a considerable amount to the members of her household:

To her First Lady of the Bedchamber, Fräulein von Neindorff, who had been fifty years in her service, and had nursed her during almost uninterrupted sickness, she left 50,000 marks, and 30,000 marks to Fräulein von Schöller, the Second Lady of the Bedchamber, with 10,000 marks to each of her two wardrobe women. Count Perponcher and her private secretary Von dem Knesebeck also received considerable legacies. Among the domestic servants were named the French lacquey Corbail, the German Fischer and the Englishman Chapman who each had 6,000 marks; two others 2,000 marks each, and the two coachmen who drove the Empress 1,000 marks each.

was presented to her and the elder ones called in to tell her what they had been doing.

The widow of General Schmidt had a daughter in the Institute who became seriously ill of nervous fever. Her mother, who lived in Silesia, was told that her child's life was in danger and she hastened to Charlottenburg as quickly as she could, to find the Empress sitting by the bedside of her daughter.

"I did not want her to miss her mother," said Augusta, as she rose to give place to Frau Schmidt, "she is under my protection, you know."

She was equally sympathetic in her visits to her hospitals, where she had friends in each ward, and when it became known that she had returned to Berlin in the autumn, there was general joy and excitement, but no fuss or disturbance when her carriage was heard, only a striving of the patients to sit up in bed to see her; to welcome her, and to express grateful thanks for the good things she had sent them.

She spent the early part of Christmas Eve with her family, and then drove to the Augusta Hospital which she never omitted to visit on Sundays and festivals. Here she met with many patient sufferers who suited her own temperament,

and whose pains she could so well understand. If she was told that an invalid whom she knew was leaving the Hospital, she hastened from the Castle to give him a cheerful "send off," and in later years, when she was almost a prisoner to her wheeled chair, it was by sheer force of will that she was able to go up and down the wards, supported by a nurse, upon whose arm she pressed more and more heavily; and yet, she always hoped that when she had visited the ground floor, she would be strong enough to mount the stairs and see other eager patients.

The interest of the Empress Augusta was equally keen in the soup kitchens, and as soon as she heard of them in 1868, she longed to visit these institutions and to make the acquaintance of their foundress. One bitterly cold day in February therefore, she alighted at the steep steps which led up to one of these kitchens. Her attention to Frau Morgenstern and her work had been aroused first of all by the grand results that had been achieved through the energy of this zealous lady, and the friendly relationship which developed in the course of years between a member of the middle classes and her Majesty must be attributed to the almost southern

enthusiasm with which Frau Morgenstern surrounded the person of her patroness.

When Augusta, accompanied by her gentleman in waiting, came and tasted a few spoonfuls of the food prepared for the very poorest of the people, and when she spoke kind words of encouragement to the assistant ladies, it coincided accurately with what she claimed as a tribute to her Imperial worth, that the foundress should translate the humble thanks of those present into some choice and well-adapted expressions. When Frau Morgenstern sang the Empress's praises in poems that were more enthusiastic in tone than correct in form, when in subservient language she attributed to Augusta her own work, when she noted in her report each step and word of her Majesty, when she paraded on every occasion her natural devotion to her in well-meaning, but exaggerated terms, it touched the sovereign most pleasantly, as an exhibition of feeling which she so often missed. And she too shewed her gratitude: pecuniary difficulties overtook Frau Morgenstern which the Empress removed, and when the doctors advised a residence in the South for the overworked authoress, it was again Augusta who opened her purse. Frau Morgenstern was

libellously attacked in the papers, and could conceive no better plan than to send her daughter to the Castle, from which moment the Empress made it even more apparent than before how highly she esteemed her enterprising friend.

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During a residence of some years in Germany, I had the opportunity of seeing the Empress Augusta on several occasions and under very different circumstances. I met her in the Thiergarten or in the Keiserin Augusta Strasse, where she used to walk with one of her ladies while the carriage followed; from my seat at the Opera I could overlook the Imperial box which she frequently occupied, and I was present at her golden wedding. At subscription balls and similar festivities, I saw her seated in her wheeled chair, or moving slowly from group to group, thirsting for the favour of the people which had been so palpably denied to her.

From the Lützow Strasse where I was residing, I could see her driving to the hospital, and it sometimes happened that after I had observed her in a first act at the theatre, I met her in her simple brown carriage and pair as I was going home, and I frequently watched her alight at the hospital, I was seized with sincere esteem

for this sovereign who employed so much of her time, and fought so courageously against her own sufferings, in order to comfort others.

But I also had the honour of seeing her in closer proximity.

Seven, eight or more ladies were together in a corner of the soup kitchen, most of them connected with the institution, though a few outsiders had been allowed to be present, as the Empress was expected. Among us was Frau Morgenstern, the very life of the group, with spectacles and her white hair dressed high up from the forehead. It was just a year since I had seen Augusta, and in fact I had seldom been so near to her, but this meeting left an indelible impression upon my mind. We heard the carriage stop, and Lina Morgenstern hastened to receive the Empress, who entered followed by Herr von dem Knesebeck and Countess Hacke.

Her high forehead was concealed by the lace of her bonnet, her hollow cheeks were rouged, and she moved slowly towards us in her stately aristocratic manner, but it was plain to see how age and grievous sickness had set their mark on both features and movements.

This first impression was only for a moment, and a smile overspread her countenance like a

beam of light, as she addressed a few words to Frau Morgenstern, who afterwards introduced the ladies present; when flattered, but shy, we all bowed low before the Empress who addressed a friendly word to each one of us in turn.

I was struck by the tone of her voice as she spoke to me, and looked up into her good expressive eyes, to receive an encouraging, but painful smile. She referred to the north where her grand-daughter was staying, and then to my name which she remembered as connected with Switzerland and its literature,* and then she kindly spoke of a few trifles of my own which she had read. Her gentle kindness went to my heart; and what especially touched me—I can affirm it in all sincerity—was not only the unexpected attention, pleasant as that was, but my thoughts went beyond her stately carriage to her lonely life at Court, and as I looked at her, I asked myself how is it that happiness has so persistently passed her by?

Years have elapsed since I stood, young and unknown, in the presence of the Empress of Germany, and I have often seen her since, but the recollection of that morning in the soup kitchen is as vivid as ever. I can close my eyes

* Tschudi, author of the "Chronicon Helveticum."

and see the modest room with its mottoes, and seem to hear the words of the Empress as she leant back against the wall with her bowl of soup in her hand.

Seldom have I trod the paths where she was so often to be met, or crossed the Platz where she lived, and looked up at the Castle, without recalling her presence with feelings of deep sadness.

CHAPTER XII

ATTACKS ON THE EMPEROR'S LIFE—GOLDEN WEDDING—
EMPRESS A PATRONESS OF LITERATURE

WILLIAM I. was averse from any alteration in his surroundings, he did not like "to change servants," as he expressed it, and felt that the absence of old faces and the presence of fresh ones was a reminder of his own advancing years.

Paul Vasili compares the Berlin Court with an old furniture shop and says: "When we used to see the monarch come in on some festive occasion, accompanied by a troop of ancient, tottering courtiers, all trying to disguise the ravages of time by artificial means, we could not help admiring the ruler, who had managed to wear out two generations.

Not a man of the inner circle dare say; "I am getting old," and no new element was ever introduced which by its mere freshness might have pointed at failing powers. While courtiers fell out of the ranks, and the century wore on,

nearer and nearer to its close, life at the Imperial Court glided on in its rigid monotony, from which it was rudely startled by two murderous attacks on the life of the Emperor.

As William I. and his daughter were driving along Unter den Linden, May 11th, 1878, a journeyman tinker, named Hodel, fired two revolver shots at the Imperial carriage which missed their mark.

"I cannot understand that anyone should want to take my life," the Emperor is said to have exclaimed. "I have never given cause for hatred."

On Sunday, June 2nd, he left the castle alone in an open carriage, at two o'clock in the afternoon, when two shots were fired in rapid succession from a window of the Linden Hotel, which struck the Emperor and threw him backwards, while blood poured from thirty small shot wounds in his face, head and shoulders. The murderer, Dr. Karl Nobiling, was caught, but not before he had shattered the jawbone of the landlord of the hotel and fired upon himself, the wound eventually resulting in his death.

Hodel's attempt at murder had roused the wrath of the people, which became intensified when they heard of this fresh attack, and the

night was passed in discussing the outrage, or looking anxiously up at the palace windows behind which the wounded sovereign was lying.

The Empress and the Crown Prince were at once informed of the circumstance, and the former accompanied by the Grand Duchess Louise, arrived in Berlin from Baden Baden, early the following morning, but it was not till the evening that the Crown Prince and his family could reach the capital from England.

In spite of her own feeble health, which really forbad the least exertion, the Empress did not leave her husband, who suffered cruelly, although his advanced age did not prevent his wounds from healing quickly.

As soon as all danger was over, the doctors advised Augusta to continue her course of baths, and towards the end of July she returned to Baden Baden, while the Grand Duchess accompanied her father to Toplitz. After spending a month later on at Coblentz, the sovereigns went to Karlsruhe, to be present at their granddaughter's confirmation, and returned to the capital, Dceember 5th, when they were received at the station by the Princes and Princesses, as well as by many of the nobility. They drove to the castle in quite a triumphal procession

between serried ranks of students and municipal bodies, and accompanied by every member of the Court.

In memory of the Emperor's restoration to health, collections had been made throughout the Empire to build a church in Berlin, the so-called "William's Gift," to which nobody was allowed to contribute more than a mark. This resulted in 1,700,000 marks from 11,500,000 donors which were handed to the monarch on his return home.

William I. had long been an old man, and it was simply wonderful that at eighty-one he had so far recovered from his serious wounds, at the same time it would have been unnatural if such a mental and physical shock had left no trace. In March, 1879, he had the misfortune to slip and fall, when the injury to his arm and left side kept him a prisoner to his rooms for some time. The same month, Waldemar, the son of the Crown Prince, died of diphtheria when eleven years old. On the 22nd, the bright healthy child had wished his grandfather many happy returns of his birthday, he was taken ill on the 24th, and died on the morning of the 27th. He had been the favourite of his grandparents, and his death was a sore grief to them both, while from that

day it became evident that the vigorous constitution of the Emperor had begun to succumb to the infirmities of age. When at Babelsberg he stumbled again and dislocated his knee, which was not well when it was time to begin the preparations for his golden wedding.

William and Augusta were the first rulers of the house of Hohenzollern to celebrate this event, but they would allow of no personal gifts. "Give to the poor rather than to us," was the exclamation of them both. Times were bad, and distant echoes were heard resulting from those murderous attacks with more stringent laws against the Socialists in consequence; in addition to which commercial failures were of frequent occurrence.

But in spite of all this, the city did its best to celebrate the wedding of the "golden" bride and bridegroom. Their busts decorated with myrtle, orange blossoms and inscriptions adorned the windows, while well-meant, but badly written "specials," medals, flags, or memorial cards were attainable by all, and few were to be seen, who did not wear or carry the Emperor's favourite cornflowers.

With a religious ceremony, solemn as the service of fifty years ago, the Imperial pair

renewed their vows, the church bells rang again, and again the hundred and one guns were fired.

The Emperor went up to the altar leaning on his ivory crutch, but the Empress happened to be unusually well that day. She wore a gold myrtle wreath over her bridal veil, in addition to her diamond crown, and over her white satin gown a tunic of gold tissue, bordered with gold lace. With the Countess Perponcher at her side and maids of honour carrying her train, she entered the Castle chapel erect and dignified as usual, and knelt before the altar. The Emperor, whose knee was still troublesome, remained standing until the Chaplain was ready to pronounce the blessing, when he too knelt. It was a moment of deep sadness, when after a union of fifty years, almost devoid of happiness in each other, they were again kneeling at the foot of the altar, where they had sworn to be one alike in good and evil days, now with feeble trembling hands and tearful faces plighting their troth yet once again.

The capital was illuminated at night, and the crowd was so dense that the string of carriages passing through the city had to stand for hours before it was possible to drive on.

Their Majesties, the Emperor with a myrtle

bouquet of gold, and the Empress still wearing her wreath, greeted the throng from the Castle again and again, and as I looked upon the historical balcony on which the Imperial couple were standing, the melancholy words of Chateaubriand came into my mind :

"We are all strongly attracted by ruins, and the feeling is connected with our own weakness and the instability of our existence. They give a moral tone to the scenes of nature and when they form one of the features of a painting, we seek in vain to fix our eyes elsewhere, they return again and again to become riveted to this one spot."

The different institutions which were founded all over Germany in the course of the year, gave a permanent impression to the recollection of this golden wedding.

"In view of the increasing need which craves our vigorous help in these depressing times," the Emperor said, when returning thanks. "advantage has been taken of our golden wedding to multiply the number of beneficent societies scattered over the Empire, in order the more permanently to further the aims of philanthropy in accordance with our hearty desire."

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Three days after the ceremony, Augusta wrote to her brother.

"I am addressing to you the words that are really meant for Weimar, while recognising with deep emotion how greatly I am indebted to our parents and grandparents, whose example and the precepts which they inculcated have so materially helped me through life. I have never wavered in my loyalty to the house of my forefathers, and I am constrained to name one cause in especial which has led me to enjoy with grateful feelings the uninterrupted union with my home. On every occasion I have met with sympathy that I have valued, and which has been especially welcome to me at this solemn time, when I have received such countless testimonies of loving devotion. Words cannot interpret the feelings of my heart towards Weimar, though I am impelled to send hearty thanks through you as speedily as possible. May God protect the house of my forefathers and my home! AUGUSTA."

I have already noted in former chapters that the Empress never forgot the home of her childhood, but faithfully adhered to all her early impressions, and considered it her duty to tread in the footsteps of her race.

Literature had been the delight of her youth and continued to be so in old age, when the grand-daughter of Charles Augustus still felt herself called upon to assist and further the cause of letters. We saw that before she became Queen, she surrounded herself with men of culture and intellect; she selected Berthold Auerbacr for her reader, a choice which in those days indicated a breadth of view that few Princesses would have dared to avow. As Queen and Empress she liked the society of authors when etiquette would allow of it, and during the weary hours of her solitude, books were her dearest friends. Among the poets she appreciated may be named her favourite Fritz Reuter, whom Prussia had condemned as a traitor and cast into prison for seven or eight years in the reign of her father-in-law, whose works she read again and again, learnt by heart and frequently quoted. It happened not infrequently that during her summer travels she passed his villa which stood at the foot of the Wartburg, and if she saw Fritz Reuter in the garden, which he himself had planted, she would stop the carriage, when a pleasant intellectual exchange of thought took place between the Empress and the people's poet.

January 25th, 1871, when Franz Grillparzer was

celebrating his eightieth birthday she wrote to him:

"As a lover of German poetry, and Weimar's daughter, I cannot refrain from expressing to you my sincere congratulations on the occasion of your birthday and of associating myself with the numerous admirers of your muse who are offering their homage to-day. May peaceful and happy years be yet in store for the poet, who in such a marked manner has understood how to rouse and elevate his nation."

If she came across a book by chance or found it favourably criticised in the papers, whose author was a stranger to her, she never lost interest in him, if his work had pleased her; after which she would read all that he had written, and express the wish to become acquainted with some details of his life.

She liked to have authors of the day presented to her, quite irrespective of the school of thought to which they belonged. The great ones she honoured with gifts and mementoes, but in the presence of those who were struggling under pecuniary difficulties, she did not forget that as Heine puts it, "one cannot live on laurels, one needs carp as well." Nobody ever appealed to her without being morally certain of assistance,

and it happened that some were sought out who did not come forward. The least attention paid to herself was sure of recognition, and on one occasion a perfectly unknown, insignificant author sent her a poem, for which he had never dreamt of receiving thanks, and his astonishment was intense when a gentleman from the Imperial household found his way to his house. The official had come to present him with a sum of money in the name of the Empress, which the young writer at first hesitated to accept till the messenger insisted on it, and observed that it was a principle of her Majesty never to allow labour and trouble to go unrewarded.

Another author one day received some money from Baron Knesebeck with a letter in which he thanked him in the name of the Empress for a book which had been sent to her. The author returned the money, and begged the Baron to inform her Majesty that he had not sent the book ; though the publishers might possibly have done so. "Even if I had allowed myself to trouble the Empress with one of my works," he added, "I could certainly not have accepted payment for it."

Some time afterwards he heard accidentally through his bookseller that the Empress Augusta

was in the habit of purchasing several of his writings each year as Christmas presents, and that she wished him to be presented to her, when she handed him a breast-pin which she had had made with a device symbolical of his authorship.

CHAPTER XIII

SERIOUS ILLNESS—INCREASED INFIRMITY OF THE EMPEROR—JUBILEE FESTIVITIES—DEATH OF TWO EMPERORS

HARDLY a day passed during the last thirty years of Augusta's life, in which she was really free from bodily suffering. She could never conquer or forget it, although her pride had bidden her hide her agony with a smile, and it was only her doctor and those in closest attendance upon her that thoroughly grasped the extent of her self-control.

It therefore came as a shock, in 1881, that she was at the point of death at Coblentz, that a dangerous operation was imperative, and that the pain, which seemed unbearable, was every minute increasing in intensity. Her family hastened to her bedside and the Court was disturbed by the serious turn taken by the complaint. She partook of the Holy Communion in intense agony and then ordered that the operation should be undertaken at once. It

lasted an hour and a half, for in addition to the mischief which had caused such sudden danger, the surgeon sought to remove the old trouble which for twenty years had caused her such excruciating pain. The result of the operation had been doubtful from the first, but it proved successful, although the Empress never regained her former strength. As soon as it was possible, she was sent to Baden-Baden, where she might be seen in a high-backed invalid chair, sallow and languid, with her emaciated hands folded idly in her lap. A continuous palsied movement of the head which no remedy could counteract, bore witness to the nervous tension consequent on the operation.

The Emperor had borne his weight of years with wonderful elasticity, and as we have seen, it was not until after Nobiling's attack that his strong frame had shown signs of decay; but when he was eighty-five, he began to suffer from an affection of the kidneys, his walk became unsteady, and his powers, both mental and bodily, seemed to be failing. He used to forget the most recent occurrences and inquire vaguely about matters that had engaged his attention only the previous day. It was natural that the old man should not wish his increasing infirmities to

be made too public, and it was likewise in the interest of those about him to make the world believe that he was less feeble than his own intimate circle knew to be the case. When therefore it was absolutely necessary for him to appear on important occasions, the greatest pains were taken in the previous preparations. There were always difficulties connected with the opening of Parliament, and especially with reading his speech from the throne on account of his defective sight, for he could never be induced to wear spectacles. The letters were therefore formed on such a gigantic scale, that his short speech looked like a book in his hand, the pages of which he read and turned again and again as he stood erect indeed, but stiffened and padded. The people were delighted, and the evening papers reported that "the Emperor looked wonderfully well, and had read his speech in an audible voice."

But in spite of these and many other devices to keep him upright, to hide his actual infirmities, and his apparently erect bearing when reviewing the troops, it was impossible to disguise the ravages of advancing years. Those about him knew that he was sitting like an automaton in his saddle, and that his horse was specially trained to suit him.

Then came a series of falls, either in some watering place, in the Castle at Berlin or on the staircase leading to the Imperial Tea-room at the Opera, which were looked upon by some as the results of slight attacks of paralysis, and in spite of the reassuring accounts which continued to be circulated by the Court, the people could not easily be pacified.

Their devotion to the Emperor was never stronger nor more apparent than during these years of weakness, and every day crowds assembled under his study windows to catch a glimpse of him, or a sign of recognition. If he had been ill, the throng was so dense as to impede traffic, and if he was feeling but slightly indisposed, the physicians begged him not to go to the window, but he would not heed them. "I must," he said, "it stands in Baedecker that the passers-by have a chance of seeing the Emperor William, therefore I *must*, whether I will or no." And the moment he appeared, cheers were heard to re-echo from every corner of the Platz.

In spite of increasing infirmities, he exhibited incredible power of endurance on one or two festive occasions which were especially noticeable at his jubilee and on his ninetieth birthday. As his accession to the throne had occurred on the

day of his brother's death, he ordered that all rejoicings should be postponed until the following day, January third, 1886. It was a Sunday, and he would personally have preferred to celebrate the day by attending Divine service, and not allowing the city to give itself up so unreservedly to rejoicing and festivity, but neither he nor the Empress could refuse to receive congratulatory deputations, or hinder the citizens from expressing their devotion. From early morning the capital had been decorated with flags and garlands, while people of every position congregated round the statue of Frederick the Great, undeterred by the severity of the wintry weather. Privy Councillors stood side by side with petty tradesmen, and officers in gala uniform waited patiently with the labouring classes, each and all kept back by the mounted police who were clearing the ground. On the stroke of half-past-ten, the Emperor appeared at his special window accompanied by the Empress in her wheeled chair.

The interval between the operation in Coblentz and the jubilee had brought her no alleviation, on the contrary, for during the summer of 1882, she had had two consecutive falls on a polished floor at Babelsberg, which had still further reduced her strength.

While her husband was driving through the shouting eager crowd, she had been wheeled to the Imperial Chapel by a backway to await the Emperor at the entrance. Here he offered her his arm, and with her remaining energy she contrived to control her sufferings and approach the altar by his side. At the conclusion of the service, the Grand Duke of Baden conducted his mother-in-law to the Hall of Knights, where she was supported with cushions on one of the thrones, while the Emperor remained standing in front of the other.

The Princes and Princesses placed themselves according to their rank, the former by the side of the Empress, and the latter on that of the Emperor.

Princess Bismarck was the first to offer her congratulations, then came the wives of the ambassadors, followed by ladies of the aristocracy, about thirty in all. The gentlemen were preceded by Prince Bismarck, whom the Monarch received with deep emotion, as he held out both hands towards him. The Chancellor stooped to kiss his hand, but William embraced him, kissed him on both cheeks and then accorded the same hearty greeting to Field Marshal Moltke and Count Roon.

The following year, weeks were spent in preparations for a solemn celebration of his ninetieth birthday, and on this occasion also the aged sovereign would willingly have withdrawn himself from festivities, but he was fêted and honoured even more warmly than before by both princes and people on this his last anniversary.

It was certainly astonishing that he was once again able to receive numerous deputations, in addition to the members of the Imperial house, but it proved to be the last flicker of his failing powers.

His health was most precarious all through the summer of 1887, and on the recurrence of even a slight cold, the doctors considered it advisable to issue bulletins, while all who were near at hand, watching his daily decay, wondered what the future had in store. For it was evident that the moment was rapidly approaching when the old warrior-king must bid farewell to sword and sceptre, while from San Remo came tidings that the conqueror at Sadowa and Wörth was a victim to the most hopeless disease known to medical science.

Although it must be admitted that the Crown Prince had long had the germs of the malady which wrought his death, it was not until the

spring of 1887 that any definite account of its existence had become known.

In addition to the German doctors who were treating him, the English authority on throats, Sir Morell Mackenzie, in whom the Princess had the greatest confidence, was also consulted, and the Crown Prince went to London in order to derive the greater benefit of daily supervision. He was present at the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, the handsomest of all the princes there, and no one who looked at him then could suspect that he was the victim of a deadly disease.

After temporary alleviation, the symptoms became more and more alarming, when the Crown Prince removed to the Riviera with his family, and took up his residence in San Remo, at the Villa Zirio, where the heartrending domestic drama first began, and his nearest and dearest alternated between slight hope and the deepest anxiety. He himself was wonderfully composed, and his winning friendliness towards everybody who came before him never wavered to the end. He concealed his sufferings as far as possible from those who loved him, and it is not improbable that he did not realise the nature of his malady, for the impression that nobody was sure it was cancer, is strengthened by a notice he sent

to the Diet in 1887, in which he expressed the confident hope that he would return to Berlin in restored health.

The grievous accounts of his son, who in February, 1888, had to submit to a dangerous operation, contributed not a little to weaken and unnerve the Emperor, whose thoughts were continually with the Prince during his own long restless nights. He wanted to go to him, and it needed all the energy and persuasion of Bismarck to restrain him from his purpose. The death of his daughter's son, Prince Louis of Baden, at this same time was also a terrible shock to the poor old Monarch, who had not the power to bear these emotions, as well as the constantly recurring pains which finally resulted in his death.

Sorrowful silence reigned in front of the Castle as a perfect stream of people filed slowly by, forbidden by the large staff of police to linger even for a moment; while on the opposite side anxious crowds were waiting for news, in the drenching rain, almost without a sound. All was still within, for the last night had come. The Empress sat by the bedside in her wheeled chair, holding her husband's hand, while the Grand Duchess of Baden bent over her dying father. There were times in his respite from delirium

when he dozed, and towards morning he drank a glass of claret which the doctor gave him, though those around had thought him to be unconscious.

Then he suddenly asked: "Where is the Empress?"

"Mamma is sitting by your side," replied his daughter.

He nodded to shew that he understood, and then said, "Go to bed."

Shortly afterwards he passed quietly away, and the Castle flag was lowered early in the morning of March 9th, 1888.

Of all the scenes in the life of Augusta not one seems to me more pathetic than this one when the old man lay dying with his wife sitting by his side, when he did not notice that it was her hand resting in his, and when his last word was an inquiry for her.

She remained sitting thus, her eyes fixed on the peaceful face of him whom she had married in early youth and accompanied to old age, possibly thinking that they had literally been separated all their lives.

. . . . . .

The news of the Emperor's death reached San Remo that same morning, and the heir to the throne rose from his sick bed to return home,

travelling all night in terrible weather to arrive at Charlottenburg, March 11th. The previous mildness had given place to icy cold, and a driving snow-storm was whitening the plain, while some hundreds of men and women were waiting for the train to arrive shortly before midnight. His eldest son and daughter-in-law, his sister and brother-in-law, were at the station to receive him, and it needed but a glance to see that though the Emperor Frederick was erect, his hair had become grey, his eyes had lost their brightness, and his breathing was quick and laboured.

There was not a trace of any official reception, as he and his family quietly took their seats in the carriage. How different the people, and probably he himself had pictured his entry as Emperor!

He was not allowed to see his father, but there was his poor mother crushed by her own suffering, who in this year was to witness the removal of one member of her family after another, and he was too weak to go to her. She had not seen him for nearly a year, and towards the evening of the following day the Dowager Empress drove out towards Charlottenburg. The Emperor hastened to receive her at the foot of the stairs,

but his awful malady had robbed him of the power of speech, and in the presence of this aged mother, weighed down by an overwhelming burden of sorrow, the son burst into tears, as they held each other in a close embrace.

The accounts of the health of Frederick III., after his accession, were very contradictory, and it was the opinion of many that the fact of his having been able to bear the fatigue of a long journey in such unfavourable weather, after a serious operation, *must* prove the presence of returning health, and there certainly were short periods in which his failing powers seemed to rally.

Official notices placed his condition in a favourable light and suppressed all that might cause uneasiness: while the cheerful bulletins issued by Sir Morell Mackenzie, were utilised by some members of the press to encourage the hope of a slow recovery. There is no doubt that the papers that adopted this tone were inspired by the immediate circle of the Empress, who even in San Remo had done her utmost to persuade herself and the people that her husband was not sick unto death; and after their return she had tried to convince the world that his reign would prove more than a mere interlude in the govern-

ment of the Empire. But the effort proved fruitless, and what avail was it to publish hopeful medical bulletins, when in the same breath it had to be announced that the new Emperor could not receive a deputation.

The marriage of Prince Henry with the Princess Irene of Hesse took place at Charlottenburg, May 24th, and this proved to be the only ceremony during his sad reign of fourteen weeks at which the monarch was able to be present.

The ministers, statesmen, knights of the Black Eagle and the Field Marshals Moltke and Blumenthal had taken their places when the bridal couple entered, Prince Henry leading his bride, who wore the crown jewels of the Hohenzollerns. While the voluntary, Händel's "Largo," was being played, the procession formed into a semi-circle, and the Dowager Empress was wheeled into the midst of the brilliant assembly, wearing the deepest mourning without a single ornament.

The Empress Victoria met her and kissed her hand, when all the royal guests and members of the Imperial house approached and did the same. "Tears came into my eyes," Moltke wrote to his brother, "when her grandchildren knelt before her and kissed her hand."

The Emperor entered the dimly lighted church during the singing of the wedding hymn, and went straight up to his mother, bowed respectfully and likewise kissed her hand.

"It was heart-rendering to see him bearing his heavy burden with such patience and resignation," continued the Field Marshal, "with one foot on the throne and one in the grave."

A few days later, in accordance with the wishes of the Emperor, preparations were made for leaving Charlottenburg, in which the invalid was probably influenced by that longing for change which is so frequently a precursor of death.

A great alteration was observable in his bearing and expression, as he went on board the gaily decorated vessel that was to take him to Potsdam, and the crowds assembled to witness his departure, expressed their loving sympathy by their tears, as much as by their hearty cheering.

There was just a faint hope that the more bracing air of Potsdam would prove beneficial, but the condition of the patient only became more alarming, and those nearest to him could no longer disguise their apprehensions. His patience was strong to the end, and as he looked upon

his weeping family, he would point upwards, while trusting hopeful confidence illuminated every feature. He had fought against disease, now in full resignation he laid down his weary head to die, and June 14th, on the eighteenth birthday of his second daughter, the dying father took leave of his children.

In the same castle in which he was born, he ended the life which had awakened so many brilliant hopes, June 15th, 1888.

The Empress Victoria had hardly stirred from his side during these last mournful days, and it was in her arms that he fell asleep. She placed a laural wreath on the quilt that covered the remains of the Prince who, seventeen years previously had returned home a conqueror, and who had since taught the world by his example to suffer and be still. He was born on the anniversary of the battle of Leipsic, and on that of the battle of Fehrbellin he was quietly buried at Potsdam where he had wished to rest by the side of his sons.

CHAPTER XIV

IN OLD AGE—ON HER DEATH-BED—TARDY RECOGNITION

THE Dowager Empress Augusta, who was in Baden-Baden, received the following telegram from her daughter-in-law :

" She who was so proud and happy in being his wife mourns with you, poor mother, over the death of your only son. No mother ever had his equal, be strong and proud in your sorrow. Only this morning he sent you his love. VICTORIA."

On the first intimation of the hopeless condition of the Emperor Frederick, the Grand Duchess and her husband had hastened from Karlsruhe, in order to be with Augusta in this fresh grief, and it was Louise, therefore, who prepared her mother for the final news.

The Empress insisted on returning at once, in opposition to the doctors who feared emotion and excitement for her quite as much as bodily

fatigue. Nothing they could urge would alter her determination, and she reached Potsdam before the funeral, accompanied by her daughter and son-in-law.

There is a favourite picture in Germany which represents her sitting in her wheeled chair by the side of the bed on which lies the body of her son.

From the day that William I. had been borne from the castle they had inhabited for so many years, all had been perfectly still around the aged Empress, who passed the time of her widowhood in absolute retirement, a prisoner to her chair from bodily infirmity, but bearing the heavy trials of her old age with humble trust and faith in God.

The death of the Emperor Frederick was one of the last occurrences that drew attention to her, when the sympathy of the whole land was roused for the widow, bereft of her only son by such an agonising malady. She was crushed by his death, but not rebellious, and the life she had for so many years lived for others had calmed her former uneasy longings, and she knew no better means of diverting her thoughts from all she had lost, than by resuming with renewed vigour the good works which had become so dear to her.

Her daughter's loving devotion was one of the strongest ties that bound her to earth, and she could in truth call both grandchildren and great-grandchildren her own. They on their part looked up to her with intense reverence, and felt that she belonged to another age than theirs. A new generation had suddenly come to the front, and a leap had been made from an old man who clung to hereditary traditions, to a young one longing for variety. The death of his father had created a disproportionate distance between then and now, and the attitude of the present family towards the Dowager Empress was less that of respect for her mental powers, than compassion for her bodily weakness which was so apparent.

The relations between her and the young Emperor were cordial and pleasant, each being full of attention and consideration for the other; then Augusta had always been warmly attached to the Empress Augusta Victoria, who never forgot the kindness which she herself had experienced. It was an intense pleasure when she visited the great-grandmother each Friday afternoon with her boys, whose play and observations were an amusement to her. Before they went upstairs, their mother took off their coats in the hall, tidied their hair and straightened their blouses, that they

might present a good appearance before the old lady, who always met them at the door in her wheeled chair. Then she and the young Empress retired to the study, leaving the children in the adjacent salon to enjoy themselves with the liberal supply of toys kept in their own cupboard, and to rouse the echoes of the room to their hearts' content by their merry peals of laughter.

Augusta spent the spring and autumn months in Baden-Baden, Karlsruhe, the island of Mainau or Coblentz, always with her daughter, who became more and more deeply attached to her mother after the death of their dear ones.

In the middle of September, 1889, the Empress Augusta Victoria went to Mainau on a visit to the Dowager Empress and was followed by William II. for a couple of days, that he might spend her birthday with his grandmother.

Augusta returned to Berlin, December 12th, after a stay in Coblentz, and in spite of a heavy cold, she superintended the usual preparations for Christmas, which the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Baden were to spend with her in her quiet home.

This was the first winter for many years that influenza had been prevalent in Europe, and several of her household were attacked by it,

including her daughter and son-in-law. She herself kept up for a time, and on New Year's Day, quite early, she received William II. and his wife, who wished to be the first to offer their congratulations, before attending the court receptions in the Castle. She entertained the surviving generals and courtiers of William I.'s reign at dinner, and a few days later attended a meeting of workers under the Red Cross. But on January 6th, on the appearance of alarming symptoms, she was obliged to take to bed, and in addition to her physician, Dr. Velten, who had attended her for many years, Dr. Schliep, an authority in such cases, was also called in.

As long as the fever could be controlled, there was no immediate danger, though the advanced age of the patient and her habitual weakness fully justified the fears of the medical men. She became much worse during Monday night, when an alarming rise in the temperature shewed her condition to be critical, and from three o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, it was observed that her breathing was weaker and that her strength was rapidly failing. It was evident that no remedies were of any further avail, and it was therefore deemed advisable to send for the Emperor, who up to midnight had been kept informed of his

grandmother's condition from one half hour to another. A messenger was sent at half past five, and by six o'clock he was in the room, followed by the Empress almost immediately. The Grand Duchess of Baden had passed the night by her mother's bedside, waiting upon her with the tenderest solicitude, and when Augusta woke up to find her daughter watching, she whispered: "Good child!"

At eight o'clock she sent for her private secretary, Knesebeck, and talked with him about her charitable undertakings, adding:

"Don't you think we shall be able to do some work together to-morrow?"

Before her last illness, she had frequently expressed an eager longing for death, but in spite of her extreme debility, it was evident from her remarks that she had not the slightest idea of the serious character assumed by this present attack. It was not until she heard that the Court Chaplain was in the Castle that she grasped the fact that the end must be near. She desired him to be fetched, when he read a chapter in the Bible to her and she thanked him. All the members of the family were made acquainted with the serious condition of the Empress, the performance at the Imperial theatre was cancelled,

the whole Court assembled, and representatives of the State and the Army hurried to the castle. Towards midday came the Hereditary Prince and Princess of Meiningen, Princess Maria Anna and her son Frederick Leopold, the Princes Alexander and George, and the Hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern; while in the ante-room were to be seen the Field Marshals Moltke and Blumenthal, Count Waldersee, and William II.'s Master of the Household, Count Wedell-Piesdorf, the Secretary of State, Count Herbert Bismarck, and several officials who had served under William I.

From quite early in the morning, it had been certain that there was no hope, although it was thought that the sufferer would linger until evening. She lay on a narrow bed with her hand in that of her daughter, who was anxiously noting the progress of the malady; but hour after hour went by, bringing increasing weakness, until her breathing became barely perceptible, although she retained her consciousness, and distinctly turned her glance from one to another, without the power of speech. There was a slight improvement towards the afternoon, when the Empress seemed to rouse from her apathy, opened her eyes and signed to her daughter to stoop down to her, when she whispered a few words,

which were, however, quite unintelligible. At four o'clock the doctors saw that the end was near. The Emperor and Empress, the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Baden, the Hereditary Prince of Saxe Meiningen and his wife had not left the bedside for some hours, and those of the family who were in the adjoining rooms were now called in, as well as the Court Chaplain Kohler, Count Wedell, Von dem Knesebeck, Countess Oriole and Fräulein von Neindorff.

The doctor felt the patient's pulse and signed that the end was at hand, when Louise with her voice choked with sobs, bent over her mother, and entreated her to convey her loving greetings to the dear ones gone before.—Then Dr. Velten announced that the Empress Augusta had breathed her last.

Death had been very merciful and had painlessly closed the weary eyes, while the sun which was just setting, shot its last beams into the room, and shed a wonderful purple light over the lifeless body and the figures of those present, now kneeling in silent prayer.

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The critical nature of the Empress's illness had hardly been grasped by the people, and it was not until the morning of the day she died, that

they hurried in any numbers to the Castle, when the anxious faces of the crowd bespoke their deep interest in the serious reports that reached them from time to time. Just as late on the evening of the 8th, and early in the morning of the 9th of March 1888, many had gazed at the windows and at the flag still waving from the roof, now a few minutes before half-past four, it was not to be seen, and for a moment it was doubtful if the flag had been removed as usual each evening; but when it appeared again half-mast high, it was evident that Augusta had passed away into the "better land." The bystanders were deeply moved and many women were to be seen in tears, as they walked down the broad avenues of Unter den Linden, where the glimmer from the gas lamps struggled with the fading light of day.

The news spread rapidly to every corner of the city, all amusements were suspended, and flags were rapidly floating half-mast from public buildings, as well as from several private houses, while the wares in some of the shop windows were draped with crape.

Many a royal personage has flatterers in life that forsake them in death, but this sovereign, lonely in the midst of grandeur, never knew on earth the appreciation and gratitude accorded to

her memory alone. The morning after her death, crowds entered by the wide open gates of the old Castle, and up the broad staircase to the Hall of Knights to look upon her for the last time, and passed slowly and in silence through the ante-rooms lighted by candelabra draped with crape, standing amid boughs of cypress and laurel that served to deepen the solemn impression.

The Empress, covered with her Imperial mantle, lay in the beauty of death, and in spite of her great age, traces of the days of her youth in Weimar were apparent in her features.

Masses of wreaths were silently placed around her, but they came too late to reward her with gratitude for her unwearied labours in the cause of philanthropy, and the thought involuntarily arises: If only her path in life had been strewn with half the flowers then showered upon her coffin, how happy she would have been!

Nearly two years previously, on a bitterly cold stormy day in March, William I. had been laid to rest in the Mausoleum at Charlottenburg, and on January 11th, in bright sunshine and balmy air, recalling the June-day that welcomed her as his wife, she too was taken to the same resting-place.

One dense crowd filled the streets and Unter

den Linden was lined with soldiers, students and artisans with their several flags, while at intervals were to be seen members of the Red Cross Society whose badges gave a tinge of brightness, and emphasised the cherished interests and activity of the deceased.

The French Embassy, which on previous occasions had made no demonstration, was covered with tasteful crape drapery, and in the niches of the Brandenburger Thor sacrificial bowls of flaming light flickered in the sunshine.

The red velvet casket with her crown covered with flowers,* was carried in turns by twenty-four

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* The sympathy roused by the death of Augusta was shewn by a lavish display of flowers, as much as by anything else; wreaths were sent by nearly every monarch in Europe, among others, the King and Queen of Italy, the Emperor and Empress of Austria, the King and Queen of Norway and Sweden, the King and Queen of Portugal, the Queens of England, Spain, Holland, etc., etc. The Sultan sent a device in flowers representing a crescent, the King and Queen of Roumania a wreath with the inscription on the ribbon: "In eternal grateful devotion. Elizabeth Carol." Prince Bismarck a large wreath of ivy and violets "as a mark of sincere esteem." The Princess a wreath of roses and lilies of the valley. Herr von Mayback presented a palm wreath in the name of the Ministry with the words on the ribbon: "To her Majesty, Empress and Queen Augusta in deep respectful sorrow." "The President" of the Diet placed upon her coffin a wreath of white roses and camellias with the inscription on the satin ribbon bordered with black: "From the German

gentlemen-in-waiting down the three hundred steps from the chapel and placed on the top of the hearse which was drawn by eight black horses. Every bell of every church was set in motion, and cannon reveberated over the city, as the procession moved from Berlin to Charlottenburg, during which Chopin's funeral march was magnificently rendered by a military band.

Henry XIX., Prince of Reuss, rode first, followed by a detachment of the Imperial guards in black uniform and lances draped with crape, the household of the deceased, high Court officials, a regiment of the "Garde du Corps,"

Diet to the first German Empress, who died January 7th, 1890," and the text: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." A singularly beautiful arrangement of flowers, the Red Cross on a white band of the Geneva Convention was sent by the Central Committee of the Patriotic Union of German women with the words. "To her Majesty, Empress and Queen Augusta, our exalted patroness, in never ceasing gratitude and deepest sorrow." Professor von Bergmann brought flowers in the name of the Chirurgical Society "in memory of our revered patroness, benefactress and helper." The members of the Hygienic Society sent a cushion of violets with the Red Cross in the centre, and the inscription: "In memory of our beloved, unwearied, never-to-be forgotten Empress."

Among countless other tokens of respect may be named a gigantic wreath from the chief Sanitary Inspector in Berlin, flowers from the Patriotic Union of Women in Tnowrazlaw, from the Austrian Union under the Red Cross ("To our honorary

and then the magnificent hearse with its lofty canopy draped with ermine. Immediately afterwards came the Emperor William with the King of Saxony and the Grand Dukes of Baden and Saxe-Weimar, all but the last wearing the grand cross of the Weimar "Order of the Falcon." Within a few paces followed the other princes, the Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy, who were allotted the same position in the procession, a large number of civil and military deputations, and last of all, members of the Diet and of the Societies of Science and the Fine Arts.

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member "), from nearly every branch of the Red Cross Society in Germany, from the Rifle Corps in New York, ("In esteem and admiration") from most of the hospitals and unions in which the deceased had been interested, from "Berlin's grateful Romanists," from "Berlin's grateful Fire Brigade," from "the Jewish Institution for the aged," etc.

A particularly tasteful wreath represented a white Maltese cross on green moss, with these words on the satin ribbon: "In memory of the patroness of Christian beneficence from the Silesian Knights of Malta." Another floral device bore the inscription: "With undying gratitude for repeated marks of favour from a former, long resident patient in the Augusta Hospital." One of the largest and loveliest wreaths was sent by "the grateful town of Baden-Baden." "Sorrowing Strasburg," "Grateful Königsberg," and many other cities sent flowers, and the Society of Arts in Berlin an arrangement of palms "in memory of their never-to-be-forgotten friend," etc. etc.

The municipal authorities of Charlottenburg were awaiting the arrival, as well as the ladies of the Dowager Empress's Court, who here left their carriages and took their places in the procession, as it entered the grand avenue leading to the Mausoleum, where they were met by the Empress Augusta Victoria, the Empress Frederick, the Grand Duchess of Baden and other Princesses of the Imperial house. The coffin was lifted from the hearse by officers of the Body Guard of the deceased, who carried it in, and placed it by the side of the old Emperor.

The death of William I. had caused genuine sorrow, and the grief of those who stood by the grave of his widow was equally sincere, if less demonstrative. With her passed away the last remains of the family life of the warrior-king and the curtain fell upon old times and scenes.

It is a singular coincidence that it was the lot of Augusta to rest under the same vault as the idolised Queen Louise, and that she and her mother-in-law are the only women to whom the people of Berlin have ever wished to erect a statue.

The recollection of her untiring efforts in the cause of philanthropy, the abiding gratitude engraved on loving hearts have borne their fruit.

On the anniversary of her death several influential members of the most diverse circles in Berlin issued a warm-hearted appeal for means to raise a life-sized statue to her memory in the capital, which met with a generous response and testified to the admiration and gratitude of the people, who had censured her so severely in her life-time.

In many other towns, Baden-Baden, Coblentz, etc., statues have also been erected to her memory, besides which there are countless other proofs that the Empress Augusta is never likely to be forgotten.

THE END

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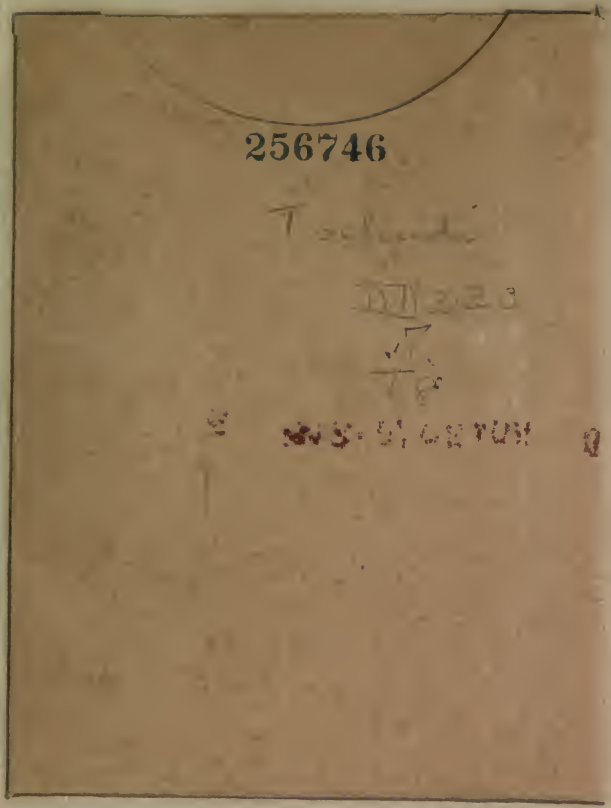
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